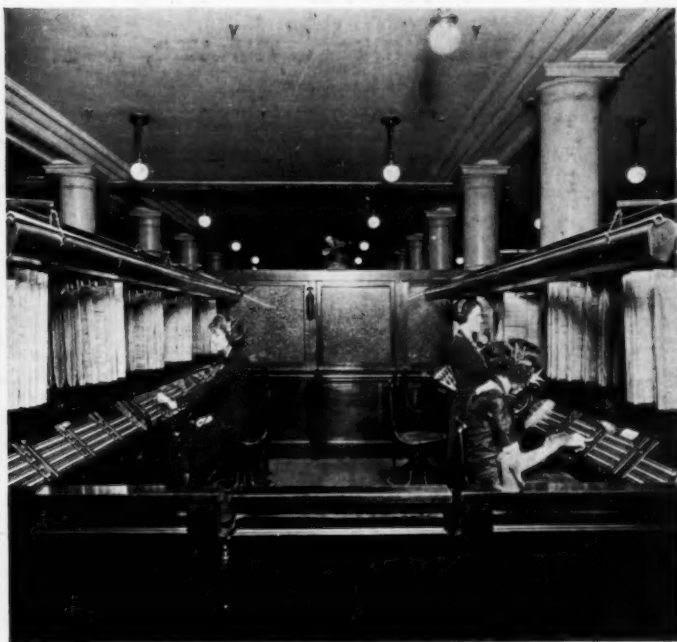


# THE CREDIT WORLD

*The Official Organ of the*  
**RETAIL CREDIT MEN'S  
NATIONAL ASSOCIATION**  
*Incorporated*



*Photo - Courtesy National Cash Register Co.*

Central Authorizing Station  
Marshall Field & Co.  
Chicago



VOLUME X  
NUMBER X

JUNE  
1922

**Retail Credit is a Business Builder. Cooperation is a Business Safeguard.  
Combined With Aggressive Selling They Spell Success.**

## Find the Answer Instantly in the New Credit Men's Roster---

- Who is in your line of business in Grand Island, Nebraska?
- Who can give you information about that new customer who has just arrived from Syracuse, New York?
- Who can you write to for information about that "skip" who it is reported has moved to Portland, Oregon?



This and other information is at your finger tips in the new R. C. M. N. A. Membership Roster, which is just off the press. In it are names and addresses of over ten thousand members of the Retail Credit Men's Nat'l Association, each "keyed" to indicate his line of business.

SIZE, 4x9 INCHES  
*Convenient for desk or pocket*

**The Price is Only One Dollar**  
You'll save that on your first collection

*The Quantity is Limited*  
*Order your copy from National*  
*Office TODAY*

# **Finds the National Electric Credit System “of inestimable value.”**



One of the charge phones by which the clerks communicate with credit office. Sales checks are authorized by electricity from credit office.

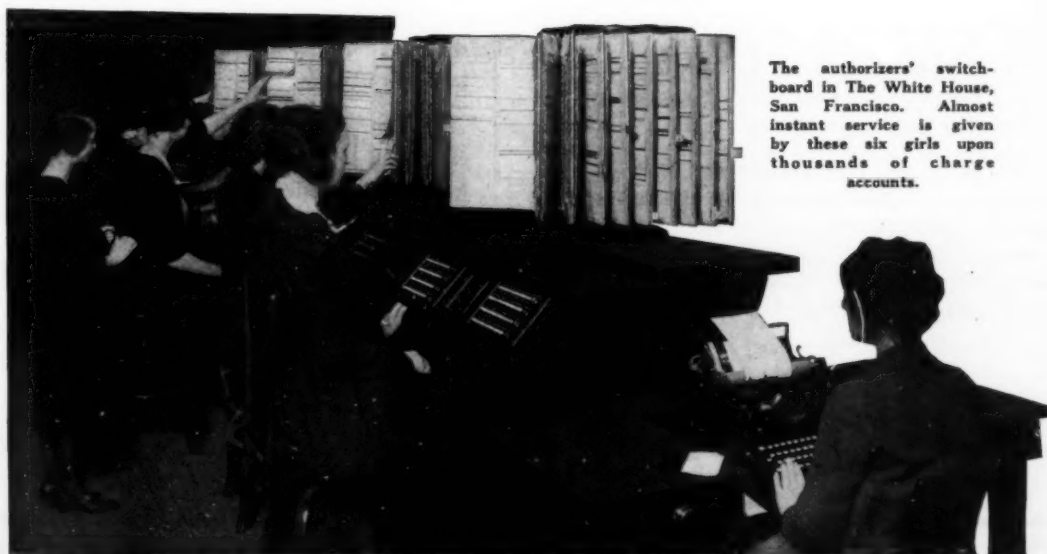
Since 1917, The White House, one of the leading department stores in San Francisco, has been using the National Electric Credit System for authorizing charges.

Regarding the splendid service which this system has given, one of the executives of the store says:

“We have found that it embodies the important essentials of speed and control—one operating to the advantage of the customer, by giving quicker and better service; the other to the office, by permitting a control of accounts which is as perfect as it is possible to have.

“We have found the system to be of inestimable value to our customers and to our credit office.”

**The National Cash Register Company  
Dayton, Ohio**



The authorizers' switchboard in The White House, San Francisco. Almost instant service is given by these six girls upon thousands of charge accounts.

SUNDAY MORNING—The Daily News Tribune—APRIL 16, 1922.

## What the Pneumatic Tube System means to our Customers

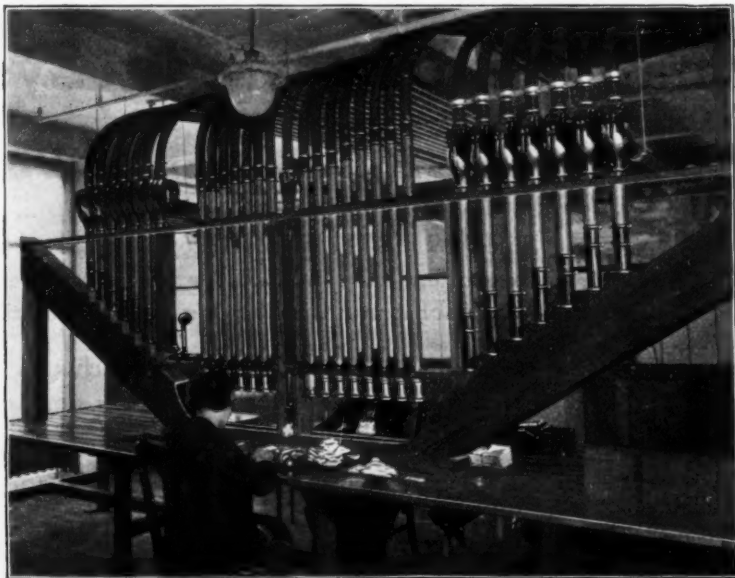
A Carrier will travel from the farthest department to the Central Desk in less than SEVEN SECONDS.

A Cash transaction will go direct to Cashier, a Charge direct to Charge Dept., thus eliminating any delay in service. That items are checked and change counted twice, thus protecting you against error.

All transactions will be handled in the consecutive order of their arrival at Central Desk.

It eliminates all delay in making change from bills of large denomination.

An itemized duplicate of sales slip will be wrapped WITH your merchandise.



Showing the cash receiving side of the system. Carrier traveling from Department to Central Station at a speed of less than seven seconds.

All charges are authorized from visible and original sales-slip, thus eliminating any possibility of you being charged with another's merchandise.

Charges will be handled without publicity.

Permits sales person to give entire attention to you and relieves her of necessity of making change.

It enables all customers who take their purchases with them to get first service because color of Carrier signifies whether merchandise is to be taken or sent.

That your change or charge slip will be returned from Central desk by the time your merchandise is wrapped.

## “---and what it means to us”

The advertisement pictured above shows what the I. Freimuth Department Store, Duluth, Minn., told their customers about the service they would receive with their new Lamson pneumatic tube system. The automatic gravity type central desk is shown in the photograph.

Mr. Freimuth tells us as follows what the new system actually accomplishes. Notice particularly what quick charge service it gives.

“In order to thoroughly try out our system we put on a special installation sale with excellent results. The service was very quick and most satisfactory. We tested out a great many carriers from all departments during the day and found that on cash sales carriers were sent to the cash desk and returned to the clerk in from twelve to thirty-five seconds.

“On charges we averaged forty-five seconds. This we consider very good service, in fact, many of our customers were overheard to comment on the speed with which our charge sales were handled.

“We are now operating almost entirely with the clerk wrap system, where we formerly used inspection wrappers.

“Previously we have used local floor cashiers for handling special sales. With the new system, however, all transactions were handled in the central desk, making floor cashiers unnecessary. Your new tube system has earned our hearty recommendation.”

Signed,

I. FREIMUTH

THE LAMSON COMPANY  
BOSTON, MASS.

Branches in principal cities

**Lamson** Speed Protection **IMPROVED Service**  
Flexibility Economy





# THE CREDIT WORLD

Official Organ of the



## RETAIL CREDIT MEN'S NATIONAL ASSOCIATION

Issued Monthly

DAVID J. WOODLOCK, *Editor*

Subscription: \$5.00 Per Year

Executive Offices, 312-314 North Sixth Street, St. Louis, Mo.

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## EDITORIAL

### WHAT I SAW IN THE NORTHWEST

Because of the time and expense of a trip to the Northwest, I had long hesitated about making the journey. However had I known as much about that section of the Country as I now do, I would have jumped at the opportunity.

After three days and three nights on a Pullman, I arrived at Spokane, the Birth Place of our National Association.—Ten years ago in this City was planted the seed that has brought about the great National Organization. I was met at the station by National Director Watson, past Director Shockly, J. Frank Jefferson, President of the Local Association and others, escorted to the Hotel and placed in a room adjoining that in which this Association was born. An evening dinner by the Directors of the Spokane Local and a Noon-day meeting the following day gave ample opportunity to look over the membership, which I found remarkably alive to the opportunities of Co-operation, local and national, with excellent leaders and a live membership. The National Association can well be proud of the Credit Men composing the Local in the *City of our Origin*.

After a night ride I arrived in Portland early Thursday morning and found a Committee headed by President J. F. O'Gara and Past President J. A. Brooks awaiting me. Breakfast over, I was taken in automobile over the Columbia River Highway, through the most beautiful scenery it has ever been my pleasure to see. Towering mountains, magnificent Forests, Beautiful Waterfalls make this a veritable fairyland. Returning to the city, I was in time for an evening meeting of the Local Association, well attended and showing the same spirit of co-operation I had found in Spokane. Portland is a great city with wonderful possibilities.

I then went to Tacoma, arriving several hours ahead of schedule and disappointing the Reception Committee. Although it was Saturday, a large well attended meeting was held on the Roof Garden of the Rhodes Brothers Store of which Mr. G. A. Johnston, who is president of the Local is Credit Manager. He is a live wire, as is also Mr.

F. S. Roberts, who is Secretary. The following day being Sunday, President Johnston took me for a drive to Camp Lewis, passing many beautiful lakes and winding up at the Golf Club for luncheon, where I had a fine view of Mt. Rainier, the largest mountain in the United States. Upon my return to the Hotel I found a Delegation of Credit Men from Seattle waiting with an automobile and was treated to a delightful ride through sixty miles of beautiful rugged scenery to Seattle, where our Conference was held on May 15th and 16th. The car was driven by Mr. F. E. Dingley, Chairman of the Entertainment Committee and maintained an average speed of four hundred and eighty-three miles an hour during the entire trip. They were showing a tenderfoot from the East? a touch of high life and all I could do was to sit back and pray that the National would not be required to send condolences to Mrs. Woodlock. It appears these Credit Men out West are so full of pep and energy they must let it out.

Returning I stopped at Denver, just missing their Annual Meeting held the evening before my arrival. About three hundred members had attended this meeting, which shows Denver is solidly behind National Director Reed in Local and National activities. About twelve Delegates will go to Cleveland from Denver. Space prohibits my telling all the details of my trip, but I wish our entire membership could imbibe that wonderful spirit of co-operation of helping the other fellow—that spirit of "Do it or Bust," so evident every where in the West. The big mountains and the broad expanse of territory may make the Merchants and Credit Men big and broad in their ideas, but whatever it is, the entire membership could well take example. *I admire the Credit Men and Women of the Northwest.*

D. J. Woodlock.

### THE PACIFIC NORTHWEST CONFERENCE AT SEATTLE, WASHINGTON

Promptly at ten o'clock, A. M. on May 15th., President G. R. Raymond called to order the second Annual Conference of Retail Credit Men of the North-West. Over two hundred Delegates representing twenty-

three different Cities in Washington and Oregon were present, the sessions being held in the Auditorium of Frederick & Nelson's new store. After formal welcome by G. R. Raymond, President of the Seattle Association and Lieutenant Governor W. J. Coyle, with response by J. F. O'Gara, President of the Portland Association, the delegates were treated to a brilliant business talk on Credit Psychology and Humanics by Stephen I. Miller, Dean of University of Washington. The noon luncheon was held in the L. C. Smith Building, and delegates divided into groups representing various lines. After lunch they went to the top of the building (forty-two stories) and had a view of Seattle and surroundings. Monday afternoon and Tuesday were devoted to discussion of various Credit problems. Many instructive talks were made and details were brought out by National Secretary D. J. Woodlock, who acted as Quiz Master.

On Monday evening after an automobile drive, the delegates were entertained at a Banquet by the members of the Seattle Association and their wives, over four hundred were present at the Seattle Yacht Club. Only two set speeches were made, Mr. Ralph W. Watson of Spokane, National Director and D. J. Woodlock of St. Louis, Secretary-Treasurer. The rest of the Programme consisted of songs and dances and it was near mid-night when the Entertainment Committee reported they had finished the Programme.

Mr. F. E. Dingley of Seattle was Chairman of the Entertainment Committee and Mr. N. Hallgren was Toastmaster. At the Tuesday session the Conference voted to hold the next meeting at Portland and endorsed Spokane's invitation for the National Convention in 1925, when the Worlds Fair will be held in Portland. The entire North-West feels that the attraction of the Fair together with the reduced rates will make Spokane an ideal place for our 1925 Convention.

### WISCONSIN STATE CONFERENCE

The first annual State Conference of the Retail Credit Men of Wisconsin was held at Milwaukee on May 15th. Mr. Fred S.

Krieger reports that the success of the Conference exceeded their fondest expectations.

Among the speakers were Mr. E. W. Nelson, President of the National Association; Mr. F. S. Krieger, Secretary of the Milwaukee Association; Mr. J. A. Fetterly, President Kiwanis Club; Mr. Albert Freitag, of S. Heymann Co., Oshkosh; Mr. Erwin Kant, Credit Manager, Ed Schuster & Co.; Miss D. W. Gill, Credit Manager, H. H. West Co.; Miss L. Harder; Mr. H. A. Gibans, Credit Manager, Boston Store; Mr. S. A. Bialecki, Milwaukee Gas Light Co., and Mr. J. A. Fetterly.

Some of the papers read at this Conference are printed in this issue.

#### SAVE THOUSANDS BY CO-OPERATION

Woodlock Tells How Retail Men Have  
Built for Future Business

—Reprinted from Spokane Chronicle, May 11, 1922.

How American retail merchants are saving untold thousands annually for themselves, and eventually their customers, by restricting abuse of credit through co-operation in investigating and reporting undesirable risks to fellow retailers was explained by David J. Woodlock, secretary-treasurer of the Retail Credit Men's National Association, in an address before members of the local branch at luncheon at the Davenport today. Mr. Woodlock was introduced by President J. F. Jefferson of the Spokane association.

Organized 10 years ago, with an initial membership of 15, the Retail Credit Men's National Association now is organized in 148 of the larger cities of the country and has a membership of more than 10,000, Mr. Woodlock said.

"The retailer himself," said Mr. Woodlock, "is principally to blame for undesirable accounts on the books of nearly every firm which advances credit. In the old days we used to delight, when we lost money on an unscrupulous customer, to recommend that customer to a competitor as a good risk. But we found out that we had as many bad risks shoved our way as we shoved onto the other fellow, and that that system didn't pay. It's a good thing for us to be competitors in business, but we must co-operate in weeding out the undesirable risks."

Mr. Woodlock urged members of the association to patronize and build up local rating bureaus, and to centralize organizations for detecting and spreading information concerning bad risks.

#### Bad Check Artists—Problem.

Retailers, through co-operation also have done away with the "returned goods" item, in which a customer obtained goods on credit and after wearing the article once or twice, returned it to the shop and demanded credit to the amount of the article, Mr. Woodlock said.

The bogus check passer is one of the biggest problems with which retailers now have to deal, according to the speaker.

Mr. Woodlock expressed surprise that women were barred from the Spokane association and recommended their admittance. He will leave tonight for Portland and Tacoma, and Monday and Tuesday will address the northwest conference of retail credit men at Seattle.

#### MEMPHIS ASSOCIATION'S ANNUAL BANQUET

A full-fledged circus, with clowns, bareback riders, menagerie, red lemonade and everything entertained 250 members of the Memphis Retail Credit Men's Association at the annual banquet and election at the Hotel Gayoso May 9.

Judge Israel Peres said the invocation and immediately following the dinner the circus was staged under the direction of the able E. S. Worden. Mrs. W. L. Webb and Miss Letha Cullins proved adepts as horseback riders their steeds being hobbies which revolved about the ring, and on which they performed their death-defying stunts. Mr. O. E. Weigel was in charge of the act. The female impersonator, Chas. McCauley, thrilled the audience with a tight rope act, even though the rope was on the floor and a humorous fortune telling act was given by Mr. W. B. Hill, alias Prof. Bunkum. Messrs. Grider Wiggs and O. C. Bowden were the dashing steeds for Misses Mary M. Goldschmid and Esther Liberman, Roman maid drivers, in a real Roman Chariot race.

Messrs. Walter Wainwright and E. C. Jacobs proved to be unusually clever clowns. Mr. Geo. H. Coulter entertained with jiu-jitsu feats and slight of hand. A choice aggregation of "animals", and sideshow attractions excited much amusement.

Mr. Geo. A. Lawo, former president of the Memphis and the National Associations, and his splendid corps of assistants carried out the program which had been conceived by Mrs. F. W. Dortch, an indefatigable worker of the Association.

Election returns for the coming year were received by radio as follows:

Mr. W. B. Hill, re-elected president.  
Dr. J. L. Manire first vice-president.  
Mr. L. G. Kiersky second vice-president.  
Directors Misses Vera Daniels and Cassie McNulty; Messrs. M. S. Lemman C. C. McRae, Harry C. Schaper, O. E. Weigel.

The president's and Secretary's annual reports showed the Association to be in a thriving condition.

We have just received a copy of the first issue of "BILLY-DUES," the monthly publication of the Associated Retail Credit Men of Birmingham, Alabama.

This is, without a doubt, one of the nicest bulletins which has come to our notice.

The editorial matter is interesting, well written and constructive.

Two articles from the bulletin are reprinted elsewhere in this issue. We congratulate the Birmingham local on their new bulletin and hope they will keep it up to its present high standard.

## For Quick Returns



## Coin Mailing Cards

Here is something you have felt the need of for some time. The nature of your business necessarily involves many small accounts that will be readily collected by enclosing these cards to customer as a safe convenience in remitting.

A most potential factor in building up and stimulating mail-order trade, and in many ways rendering a service indispensable to your business. Used by the most progressive firms everywhere.

Samples on Request

**John N. Spies,**  
Patentee and Manufacturer  
Watertown, N. Y.

## Are Your Collections Slow?

Our  
*'Aids To Collection'*  
Will Assist You—  
Promptly, Efficiently

WE can furnish you "Credit Safe-guard" inserts in a convenient size for enclosing with your statements. The wording is dignified and impersonal and stresses the importance of prompt payment of bills as a credit builder. Printed in two colors—\$2.00 per thousand—Special prices on large quantities. Samples will be gladly sent on request.

**RETAIL CREDIT MEN'S  
NATIONAL ASSOCIATION**  
SOUTHERN PACIFIC BUILDING  
ST. LOUIS, MO.



# THE CREDIT WORLD

June, 1922



## Keeping Accounts Within Limits by Control in Authorization

*Address delivered by James Wilson, Credit Manager, Denholm & McKay Company, Vice-President  
Associated Retail Credit Men of Worcester, before the First New England Conference of Retail Credit  
Grantors and Service Exchange Bureaus, held at Hotel Bancroft, Worcester, Mass., May 10, '22*

YOU credit men and women have gathered together today from all parts of New England for a well defined purpose. You have come to the heart of New England actuated by the same desires. You came not only to get acquainted with each other but you are no doubt looking for help in your chosen work.

You came to learn how the other fellows in the same line of business as yourself are doing it. You may have your unsolved problems and if you solve one of your problems or gain a new idea here today, your time and money will be well spent.

The subject assigned me "Keeping Accounts Within Limits and Control in Authorization" constitutes not one but two separate and distinct problems. These two propositions go hand in hand and each one is dependent on the other. A credit man may have solved one but not the other.

Because of the deplorable business conditions in the industrial centers of New England occasioned by the World War—unemployment, part time work, reductions in wages, strikes, and the still high cost of living—charge accounts should be watched with vigilance and handled with care.

Recently I had an illustration of the drastic cuts in wages that are happening to some people. A man who worked in one of our large industrial concerns called at my office and stated that in three reductions his wage cut had been 48%. Another customer called and stated that her husband had just received a notice of a reduction in his salary of 20% and on the same day she received a notice from the landlord that their rent would be increased \$10.00 per month.

The extravagance and over-buying so much in evidence during the prosperous years during and following the World War have not yet ceased. On the other hand on account of high commodity prices many people have been economizing. They had been going without things for several years until the larder has become bare. Consequently they have been obliged to come into the market and supply their wants, attracted by falling prices in some directions.

But taxes, rents, transportation, most food-stuffs and fuel are still as high as ever, and if the coal strike is not settled soon coal bids fair to be scarcer and higher than ever before.



JAMES WILSON

Added to these conditions if the family feels it necessary to "Keep up with the Joneses" by running an automobile "Dad" "will be put to it" to keep within his income and pay his bills in a reasonable time.

Because of these conditions with which you are all familiar I feel you will all agree with me that during these unusual and uncertain times every store that does a sizeable charge business should have an efficient system of keeping charge accounts within proper and reasonable buying limits.

I have reason to believe, however, that there are many good sized stores that have no such system and many customers are permitted to run up accounts that are out of all proportion to their ability to pay and either all or part of the account is eventually charged off to Profit and Loss or the payments—usually in installments—drag out for an interminable length of time, thus tying up capital which should be working.

The Harvard Bureau of Business Research connected with Harvard University recently dug out a lot of hard boiled facts about expenses and profits in retail stores. They found that out of every dollar that passed over the retailers' counters, the merchants kept less than two cents profit for themselves.

In an investigation of 266 retail establishments it was found that the net cost of the goods was 72.2. The average expense of doing business was found to be 25.9, making the total cost of the merchandise and distribution 98.1 leaving a net profit of 1.9. Few other lines of business are operated on so narrow a margin of profit.

It is apparent therefore, that charge accounts that are not paid in sixty days are carried at an actual loss. This careful investigation by business research experts is in my opinion an irrefutable argument in favor of care in the opening of accounts and the control in authorization, and keeping accounts within limits after they are accepted.

In Worcester's big department store there has been for a number of years a system which brings to the Credit Manager daily a list of those accounts that have exceeded their limits. The use also of the visible index with its system of colored signals stops temporarily or permanently the authorizing of charges on accounts that may have been closed for various reasons, causing these charges to be referred to the credit manager or his assistants.

You will probably agree with me that the one to be held responsible to the credit man for the record of those customers who exceed their limits is the billing clerk. She it is who posts to the bills daily and sees the indebtedness of each customer mounting up.

Assuming that in a store doing a credit business every customer's account is limited or unlimited as to total amount of purchases, and that every new account has a limit placed on it when opened, which limit is determined by the customer's business or occupation, resources or income, references, ledger experience of others, and mercantile agency ratings and reports, the secret of



success in this system is the fidelity with which the biller keeps her bills posted up to date.

But if on account of a sale the billers get a few days behind in their work, the system is still a good one.

Another factor in the efficiency of the system is the manner of informing the biller of the amount of each customer's limit.

This is accomplished in the following manner: In the office on the fifth floor and in the tube room in the basement are installed card indexes for the authorization of charges. For some years we have used the visible indexes, the most modern method for the approval of charges.

Each card contains the customer's name, address, account number, shopping booklet number and a colored disc or signal indicating by its color the customer's limit. The discs are made of paper, gummed on the back, one-fourth of an inch wide. There are five numbers and colors indicating five limits as follows:

No. 1. Yellow, the color of gold, \$150 or over, unlimited credit .....	\$150.00
No. 2. Green, \$100.00 .....	100.00
No. 3. Blue, \$50.00 .....	50.00
No. 4. Black, \$25.00 .....	25.00
No. 5. Red, the color of danger, account stopped or closed .....	Danger.

You will note that there are the least number of limits possible, on the principle that the least number of limits can be the more easily remembered by the authorizer.

The authorizer uses for the approval of charges rubber O.K. stamps bearing the date, authorizer's number and the limit number, the latter being in very large type. Each authorizer has a set of five stamps, each stamp indicating by its number a different limit. Each stamp has a colored handle and a colored celluloid strip on its front to indicate the limit it represents. The five limit numbers and the five corresponding limit colors become intimately associated together in the minds of the authorizers. For instance No. 1 stamp, yellow handle, means \$150.00 limit. Number 5 stamp, red handle, means danger, account closed.

For example: A charge ticket comes to the authorizer for a sale of \$50.00. She consults the index for the corresponding name and address. A green disc on the card indicates a limit of \$100.00. She approves the charge with a green handled stamp. This charge ticket consequently bears on it through the impression of the green stamp a large figure 2, indicating to the biller—limit \$100.00.

*Thus, every charge ticket bears its own limit.*

When the biller, in posting the charges daily to each customer's bill, sees an account exceeding its limit she enters on a limit sheet the customer's name, address, account number, amount of purchases to date and limit. The limit sheet is 8½x14 inches in size, and has a column for a new limit.

These sheets are given daily to the bookkeepers who hand to the credit manager the ledger cards of accounts corresponding to those represented on the sheet, together with the limit sheets. There are many accounts that exceed their limits, often because the first limit assigned is too low, because of lack of definite information. But these limits are elastic, subject to revision, and as new customers make their record month after month, limits are sometimes doubled and many limits are now being reduced.

Should an account show evidence of extravagance or that the customer is buying beyond his or her ability to pay, a letter may be sent arranging for an interview.

Control in authorization is effected also by means of colored signals in the visible index. When accounts are closed permanently the approval of charges is stopped by means of a red stop card placed in the index. The temporary suspension of accounts is accomplished in the following manner. Each month after the 10th the ledger clerks draw off statements of all accounts owing for sixty days or more.

The credit manager then examines these statements and indicates by number the collection letter to be sent, the ledger clerks having indicated on the statements the numbers of former letters sent if any.

There are 42 form letters in three series including lease letters, many of them being multigraphed in order to save time and labor. Each letter sent is recorded by number and date on the ledger card, where also is entered every promise made.

An alphabetical list is typed of all letters sent after the first one, the names being grouped by letter numbers. The lists are typed in sections, for instance names of accounts commencing with A and B are in one section and so on. After the letters in each section are mailed the sheets are handed to the authorizers who place pink signals on the delinquent customers' index cards.

When a charge is received on an account that has been signalled, the purchase cannot be approved without being referred to the credit Manager or his assistants. The collection sheets are then held for fifteen days and at the expiration of that time the credit manager again examines the accounts that have not been paid in the meantime, and indicates the next letters in the series to be sent.

If a payment has been made which is not satisfactory there are several letters to fit the case. If a promise has been made and not kept there is a letter to take care of that situation. Thus every account that is

sixty days or more old comes under the eye of the credit manager twice a month.

But you will ask—"It is one thing to place your signals in the index. How then do you remove them after the accounts are paid so that the customers may continue buying without the approval of charges being delayed?" When the letters for delinquent accounts are sent, the ledger clerk also makes out cards for the collector. These cards are the standard size 3x5 inches, and ledger ruled.

Every day before the collector goes on his rounds the cards he intends to take are compared with the ledgers, and if the accounts are paid the cards are so marked. These cards are then referred to the credit Manager, who if he desires to resume the accounts, passes the cards to the authorizers who remove the temporary stop signals.

Signals are also removed from the indexes by means of removal blanks which are filled out when the accounts are paid, and authorized by the credit manager.

Every day indications point to the fact that business is slowly but surely recovering from the late depression. Decrease in unemployment, bank clearings, stock and bond prices, building reports, and improving collections, all show that we are gradually entering into a period of unexampled prosperity and the credit manager who has an efficient and modern system will be able to handle the increased business which is surely coming, easily and efficiently.

#### IMPORTANCE OF CHECKING THE CUSTOMER UP TO DATE

When one of our customers gets behind with his account—and keeps on buying—steadily increasing the balance he owes you—call us up.

We can, in a few moments, find out exactly where he has accounts, how much he owes, and give you an up-to-the-minute report both as to the amount of his obligations and the manner in which he is meeting them. The important thing is to do this BEFORE his account begins to show heavy past due balances. For certainly this is true—if the customer can't pay for one month's purchases, he can't pay for two.

An example of this was brought to our attention last week. A grocer called up and asked for a report on a customer, stating that he was getting behind with his bill and now owed an unpaid balance of more than \$300. Our investigation showed that this customer owed merchants and individuals a total of more than \$1,000.00. The grocer waited too long. If he had called us sooner he would have declined further credit to this customer until the account was fully paid—he would have averted a big loss.

—Reprinted from "Billy Dues"—monthly bulletin of Merchants Credit Association, Birmingham, Ala.



## Creative Work

By L. Seward Carrick, Vice-President  
of the Associated Retail Credit Men of Detroit

IT is gratifying to note that the Retail Credit-men and women all over the country are at last awakening.

The fact that they realize it is in their individual power to remove at once and forever, the stigma of "business-killers—non-producers—and crape-hangers," which the sales and advertising departments have placed upon them and their departments in the past generations—and that they are able to do so without any visible assistance other than the sanction of their immediate superior, is encouraging.

The spirit of progressiveness, the "go get it" attitude, which has automatically followed the past demoralizing depression, has caught the retail Credit-men and women in its grasp and accelerating their business pulse, has caused them to think, to take an inventory of themselves, to analyze their departmental functions, and to consider ways and means of enlarging the duties of the department.

We should be grateful for the inspiration that has moved some of the Credit-men and women into dynamic action, generating a direct current of energy sufficient to shock them out of the path of apathetic conservatism into a progressive frame of mind; bringing into play their latent powers of business discernment, broadening their vision and causing them to study their local conditions intelligently; they realize that if they are to be, to grow to be, or to remain real Credit-men and women, they must be up and doing.

No longer can any of us afford to sit back and calmly wait for business to take its natural course. The mere investigating and rejecting or passing of credit applications and the following and collection of accounts, with their volume of routine, are not the only duties to which we, in the future, must bend our backs. No, indeed—"Them days is gone forever."

If we are to be bigger and better factors in the development of the business of the firms with which we are connected, we must assist the Advertising and Sales Departments to create new business,—to make it possible to increase sales volume,—to solidify the policy of our houses in the real, genuine, constructive service we can render to the public, and accumulate, in every legitimate manner possible, the good will we should be ceaselessly soliciting.

Business has not come back just because we have had a little buying flurry. Our future is not assured because merchandise prices have hit the bottom, and a marked improvement is evident in basic commodities.

We have no license to puff out our chests and overflow with unwarranted optimism; for it is true, as our good friend and counselor, J. H. Tregoe, is quoted in a recent issue of the Magazine of Wall Street—"We are not on the threshold of a boom. We are in the early stages of recuperation. The

factory medium of purchasing power it becomes when properly exercised.

You can do this creative work. You can make the buying public want to have a charge account with your store, by teaching them the proper use of it.

You agree that your charge customer is a more continuous purchaser in your store than a cash customer. You know it is because she enjoys the cordiality with which she is greeted by your sales people she so frequently meets, and that this friendliness attracts her. You know she doesn't take her time to shop around and be bothered with C. O. D's, etc., because of the service her charge account affords her, don't you? This being true, there is no reason in the world why she, because of the satisfaction she derives from such a service, cannot influence her friends to bring their patronage to you on the same basis, if you will help educate them on the convenience of a charge account.

It is true that until recently, some very large stores considered it unethical to solicit new business through new charge accounts. They maintained that if a customer wanted credit, the customer must come to them, and almost on bended knee, implore them to be permitted to trade regularly with them.

At that time, these stores looked upon a charge account as a credit extension—as a favor to the customer. Today, with the present problem of competition ever before them, with the thought of the hundreds of thousands of dollars they are appropriating for advertising to attract the buying public, these same stores realized they looked at the charge account through smoked glasses.

They realize that charge accounts have come into material existence in the same manner as electric transportation has superseded the horse-drawn street car, the automobile has supplanted the buggy and the income tax requirements have necessitated more book-keeping. They recognize the fact that the customer appreciates the convenience of a charge account, and wants to have an authentic record of his or her expenditures from month to month. A survey of their ledgers was made, they analyzed their accounts—considered the antecedent history of the customers, checked up the financial resources and earning capacity, made extensive inquiries, and arrived at the conclusion that a vast majority of their customers used the charge account only as a convenience, a medium of purchasing power, an accelerator to reduce the time required on their shopping tours.



L. SEWARD CARRICK

*improvement must continue slowly but surely. A patient, hopeful and perfectly confident attitude is proper at this juncture."*

It is during this stage of recuperation that we, as Credit-men and women, must help rebuild our foundation for a solid future business; we must improve our methods of attack in attracting new continuous business; we must, if we are to grow or to keep abreast of the more progressive of our fellow credit-men, deviate from the beaten paths of precedence.

We also must step out into the field of business competition. We must do all in our power to attract new business by the advance service that we can render in adding hundreds of good new future charge customers to our ledgers. We must, through educational propaganda, acquaint the public in general with the merits of a retail charge account, its conveniences, its functions, how it may be acquired, and how, by prompt paying methods, it may be maintained. We must enlighten them to the actual meaning of Credit; on what conditions it is granted, what prestige it creates, and what a satis-

## The Tucker Service

Has a series of four

### COLLECTION LETTERS

*that are bringing in the money on long overdue accounts for a large department store in Baltimore, Maryland.*

The Credit Manager of this store endorses the letters; his name will be given on request.

**\$5.00**

Tear off and mail this coupon with your check for \$5.00.

### THE TUCKER SERVICE

14 E. LEXINGTON ST.  
BALTIMORE, MARYLAND

Please send us one set of the Collection Letters, series A-3.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

## MIGHTY IN BUSINESS!



TODAY in thousands of offices and banks "EXCELLO PENS" will be used to carry on the day's business.

You too will realize the daily and hourly worth and value of "EXCELLO PENS" by giving them a fair trial. Order the style you prefer in the "EXCELLO" make, or send for samples at our expense.

"EXCELLO PENS" are plated with silver-alloy made of special heavy quality cold-rolled carbon steel. They are built to write smooth under a heavy hand, and their value is exceptional.

The "EXCELLO" No. 61 ball-point is very popular for general business use. All orders are sold with a guarantee of satisfaction. Write today for the quality pen.



**H. F. KRUEGER**  
P. O. Box 505 KANSAS CITY, MO.

This evidence convinced them that the average charge account is not a credit extension, it is a service; it is not unethical, it is progressive; they are not favoring the customer by granting a charge account (opened under and not before a rigid examination of the customer's history has been made, and his integrity confirmed) but rather, that the customer has conferred a favor on the store and has evidenced his or her good will to the store's policy, by applying for an account to be opened on the regular terms.

Consequently, these stores have adjusted their policy of conservatism; and they no longer consider it beneath their dignity to openly and judiciously solicit a class of business which every progressive merchant concedes is the back-bone of any concern.

They are cognizant of the important buying market the established accounts on their ledgers provides; and are, at last, giving due and justified credit to the Credit-men and women, for the manner in which the Credit Department employs every possible means available to keep established customers satisfied and to secure new accounts to further the future success of their store.

The day has passed when a charge account in a retail store, opened and conducted upon the firm's regular terms, can be considered in any light other than an additional service in the progressive policy of the company.

This medium of purchasing power is recognized by the Sales and Advertising Departments of some of the country's largest retail houses as one of the most beneficial co-operative measures they encounter in making quick turn-overs in merchandise. Your active and inactive accounts furnish an inimitable mailing list for them to use for direct personal contact copy. Make this list larger. When they are putting over a feature sale, the fact that the customer already has an account in good standing creates an impulse to take advantage of the bargains offered and she buys. Give them more impulses. Your General Manager is striving for more volume—not "flash returns." He wants a steady, solid increase, which will enable him to plan ahead and anticipate in a measure, his requirements six months hence. Help him by having already provided the market and the purchasing power.

This is being done today by other progressive credit-men and you, also, can do it. Of course it means more work, but you are equal to it, and you must remember the old adage, "He who never does more work than his salary calls for, never has much more salary to call for."

The writer is in perfect accord with the sentiment expressed by Co-worker F. W. Walter in his article in the April issue of the "Credit World" that, "Promiscuous solicitation at all times is unwise; but intelligent solicitation of accounts, based on at least a fair pre-knowledge of the customer's earning

capacity and bill-paying ability is quite justifiable." And in conjunction therewith, what better grade of solicitation could be secured than that of a satisfied charge customer, (with your educational literature at hand) to another prospective customer whose patronage you did not possess? Your charge customers would exercise full discretion, and would be very positive of the integrity of a new account they would recommend; your local credit bureau would be sure their recommendation was in order, long before your new prospective customer used the account for the first time.

This is not a new idea. You, perhaps, have thought of the same thing years ago—but you never have passed through a business condition such as exists today. Your inner-self—that little old man who drives us on to do—and do now—perhaps has never been so insistent that you and your Department develop a selling phase of your firm's policy of service. You, as a self-respecting and conscientious worker in the interests of your firm's and your own welfare, cannot afford to sit passively, with your hands in your lap and your mind in the air, while your brother credit-grantor speeds by you, and all because he or she has put into concrete practice that which you have permitted to mold from inaction; either because you have not had sufficient courage of your conviction to break down any resistance to your ideas, or, because you have been apathetic to your own business future.

By increasing effort, you can double the number of accounts now on your books, and your firm will gladly give you the necessary additional assistance to secure and handle them.

By exercising your individuality, coupled with common-sense methods, you can influence more good will to your store than a thousand dollars spent in advertising will accomplish.

By giving publicity to the hidden arts of credit granting, through educational propaganda, you will be doing some of the buying public an unconscious favor; incidentally, you will stamp your store as a leader in progressive merchandising, without detracting from its dignity.

By concentrating on your good accounts, and using good judgment in your selection, you will add materially to the prestige of the store, by the number of positive solicitors who are "pulling" for you.

Thus, by taking the initiative in branching out in the duties of your department—by this evidence of co-operation manifested in the results of your activities—you will have secured for all time to come a place in the personnel of your company for your department, to which you can point with pride.

## Collections

*Address of H. A. Gibans, Credit Manager Boston Store, Milwaukee,  
at Wisconsin State Conference at Milwaukee, May 8, 1922*

THE matter of collections in my mind is important and as vast as that of credit granting.

The collection man must remedy the mistakes that the credit man has made in addition to the regular routine collections and must do it in such a way as not to offend the customer, because if every account which goes on collection becomes hostile by reason of improper collection methods it will not be long until almost your entire list of accounts will have been disposed of in this way, as there are very few accounts which do not require some attention from the collection man at some time.

Many large firms fail to realize the importance of having a thoroughly competent collection man on the job. An incompetent or untactful collection man can do more harm in a day than all your soliciting and advertising can accomplish in months.

A collection man must be courteous though forcible and must have individuality. In many concerns the matter of making collections used to be left to almost any person who happened to be about the premises and very often the colored porter would be sent to make a collection. You must realize that the man who is making your collections represents your firm and you are responsible for his conduct and actions and if you expect your debtors to pay their bills they must not be offended by the manner in which the demand is made.

It takes years of training to make a good collection man and you must not be under the impression that anybody can accomplish the art after a few days' experience. The importance of the position is such that the salary must be commensurate with the value of the services rendered and it should not be the policy of your firm to see how CHEAP you can get a collection man but how GOOD you can get him, and if he is good he will be worth the reasonable salary which he will require. The job should be such that men will aspire to it rather than think that the collection man is the "goat" of the office.

You will note that I am laying particular stress on this phase because I have given it very keen observation and have learned through much experience the folly of trying to run a Credit Department with an incapable collection man.

Now as to the methods of collection: First, you send out your bill. This is a demand. This is followed in the regular routine of business by a statement on the first (1st) of the following month and if payment is not made within a reasonable time thereafter, the account is then said to be on "collection." The methods to be followed from then on depend entirely upon each individual case. Of course, you want to impress upon everybody that payment of your accounts is to be expected by the tenth (10th) of the month following purchase, if these are your terms, and it is unwise to permit "pet" accounts to openly and continuously violate this rule. Of course, if you are to refuse to sell to anybody excepting on these terms each time a purchase is made you will not do much business. You must make concessions here and there but they should be granted as a particular favor and not as a matter of right, and the customer must be made to understand that you are making a special exception in his particular case.

I shall touch briefly on the matter of Form Letters. Personally, I do not like them and they are used very little in our office. You will find that a number of customers make it a habit to get in arrears in their accounts and become habitual offenders, and if they keep getting the same Form Letters each time they do this they have no effect whatsoever. In addition to this, the sending out of Form Letters is usually left to a typist or a minor clerk in the department who is apt not to use the best judgment as to the proper form for the different accounts. It is difficult to construct a Form Letter which will fit all cases, and as long as you have to pick out the letter you are to use you may as well write a short letter which is more effective and which will show your personality.

I find that a very effective way to make collection is by use of the telephone. There are people who will ignore your letters but when you get them on the 'phone they simply have to talk to you and you can at least get a promise. When you do get a promise to pay on a certain day you want to be right on the job that day. If a man tells you to have your collector call on the 5th—do not send him up on the 4th or on the 6th but have him go right up on the 5th so that there will be no alibi to offer. If you go on the 4th they will tell you that they haven't the money yet and if you go on the 6th they will tell you that they expected you to call on the 5th and when you did not call they tell you they used the money for something else. If a man promised to send you a check

on the 15th, write him a note the 12th or 13th reminding him of his promise and you will find that very often the payment will come in which would have been passed by had the debtor not known that you were "right on the job."

The time to make a good account is during the early stages of it. If a customer is given to understand right at the outset that he is expected to pay his bills promptly you will find that he will do so and become a good customer, but if he is permitted to become careless in the payment of his account without protest you will find it hard to correct him.

The time allotted to me is too short to go into the matter of collections as fully as I should like to as I have been requested to touch upon the matter of collections after they go into the Attorney's hands. I can do this but briefly as I must leave some time open for the discussion to follow.

After the Attorney gets the account he pursues the regular course of writing a letter or perhaps two and when no satisfactory results are obtained he institutes litigation. In Milwaukee County we do not have the Justice Court as they do in the other counties in the State and all of our actions for accounts are brought in our Civil Court of Milwaukee County.

The Civil Court has seven branches and has jurisdiction up to \$2,000.00 which will probably cover any account which any retail merchant may have. The summons is returnable in not less than six days nor more than 16 days. If the claim is below \$50.00 it is assigned to the Small Claims Court and the case is heard by the Judge on the return day so that it is not necessary to go to Court more than once. No Attorney fees are permitted in this court so the cases are usually adjusted by the Judge and justice is often meted out without further expense or delay. If the claims are for more than \$50.00 the cases go into the other branches of the Civil court. On account of the present crowded condition it takes about three months to get a case on for trial. The Judges are working hard to eliminate this condition and to get their calendar cleaned up so that a case can be tried within a few weeks as it was up to a few months ago.

After you obtain your judgment, the demand is made of the debtor for payment of the amount due with interest and costs and if payment has not been made an execution is issued. An execution is a writ delivered to the Sheriff under the authority of the Court directing him to levy on any property of the debtor not exempt from execution.



The debtor is entitled to claim as an exemption, household goods or other personal property to the value of \$250.00. The Sheriff will merely make a demand and if the debtor states to him that he has nothing the Sheriff will make a return to the court showing that the execution is returned unsatisfied. It is then that the law will give the creditor much protection by having what is known as "Proceedings Supplemental to Execution." An order is obtained from a Court Commissioner upon proper showing and this is served upon the debtor, requiring him to appear before the Court Commissioner at a certain time to answer under oath as to his personal property. The debtor can stay away from court and you can get your judgment by default and he can refuse to divulge the nature of his property to the Sheriff but when he is served with a Supplemental Notice he must appear and should he fail to do so a body execution will be issued by the Court Commissioner and he will be adjudged in Contempt of Court and will be placed in jail until he purges himself of the contempt which will be by paying a fine and costs and submitting to the examination by the creditor. In this proceeding he can be asked if he has any Musical Instruments or any Jewelry, Liberty Bonds, Insurance Policy with cash surrender value, anything which he might feel secure in before the

proceedings are commenced, and as none of these are exempt from execution he will be directed to turn said property over to the Sheriff so that the Sheriff will be able to realize on the execution.

There are very few people who will permit a proceeding to go this far. I have had many of them stop the proceeding in the middle of it and ask me to wait an hour until they could go out and raise the money. I have had many settle the claim in full together with interest and all costs after the Supplemental Notice was served upon them as they well know the meaning of it. With the present cost of household goods and wearing apparel there are very few families who can well claim a \$250.00 exemption.

I shall but briefly touch on the subject of "Garnishment." Wisconsin and Minnesota are the only two states that I know of that give the creditor the extreme protection that a garnishment does here. In most states before garnishment proceedings can be instituted it is necessary to secure a judgment against the debtor and by the time this is done the debtor has had an opportunity to dispose of his personal property. In this state it is only necessary for the plaintiff or someone in his behalf to file an affidavit that the money is owing and that he believes that the garnishee defendant has money under his control belonging to defendant. The

garnishee defendant may be an employer or a bank or anybody holding not only money but personal property of any kind whatsoever.

I recall one instance where I was advised that a debtor was leaving the city and that her goods were in a car in the yards of the Northwestern Railroad ready to be moved to Chicago. I instituted garnishee proceedings against the railroad and instructed the Sheriff to serve the summons at once and inform the railroad as to the nature of the action and where the goods were, and the car was immediately detached from the train and held in the yard. The woman was expecting her furniture in Chicago and she found it advantageous to immediately settle the claim rather than keep the furniture tied up in the railroad yards for a period of ten days or so and pay demurrage on the car in addition to the other expenses, and be deprived of the use of her furniture.

After being served the garnishee defendant must hold any such moneys or personal property until directed by the court as to its disposition. If the case is settled the court will issue a release to the garnishee. If a judgment is obtained against the debtor the court will direct that the money be paid into the court and when this is done it will be applied on the judgment.

*Established in 1907 on the Rock of Service*

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**Collects**

Past due accounts

*for*

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*and*

Members of our Association

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The Civilized World

*on a*

No collection—no charge basis

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**and tear out this ad. and mail TODAY**



# The Credit Bureau in a Community

*Address of Wm. Loewi, Manager Retailers' Credit Association, of San Francisco,  
before the Northwest Conference at Seattle, May 15, 1922*

**T**HOUGH my life's work may be said to have been that of service to the Retail Merchant in the gathering together and dissemination of information which forms a basis for the extension of credit to the Consumer, I nevertheless am possessed of a feeling of trepidation in addressing a body of Credit men and Bureau managers on this subject because I feel that you are all thoroughly familiar with it.

My only excuse for doing so is that I have not as yet learned to say "No" and the further fact that my presentation of this subject may open a discussion which will enable me to add to my own store of knowledge—reasons typifying the following attributes—Weakness and Selfishness.

I am, however, strong enough not to wish to sail under false colors, and want you all to know me—for if you do, I am sure you will not be backward in assailing any arguments that I may put forth in the discussion that I am hoping will follow.

The Credit Bureau that we are going to talk about is the Mutual Bureau—that Bureau owned, or the operation of which is controlled, by the merchant public of the community.

That we may have a proper understanding of our subject it may be well for us to picture the reason for the existence of the Merchant-owned Bureau, for its being, for it is a comparatively new institution.

Up to about ten years ago it was unknown. Its place in the community was filled by privately owned institutions, most of which had their inception in the early nineties. These functioned to the satisfaction of the Retailer but about ten years ago there appeared to be a growing demand among the grantors of credit for more detailed information than it seemed possible for the privately owned agency to procure.

It was apparently impossible for these institutions to obtain that cooperation essential for the gathering together of Ledger clearances and, therefore, while they could and did place before the credit man information as to antecedents, character, earning capacity, and financial responsibility, this report was insufficient in the majority of credits extended for in these there is usually so little financial responsibility that the total indebtedness of an applicant for credit plays a most important part in the decision of the credit man.

The Merchant-owned Bureau was therefore born of necessity and its birth was hastened through the close affiliation of credit men in Credit Men's Associations.

It is a strange paradox that though the growth of retail credits was greatly accelerated by reason of the existence of the pri-

vately owned institutions which furnished reliable information that finally this growth became so rapid and the volume of credits so large that, in most communities, the Agency, which was so largely instrumental in this expansion, has either been obliterated or absorbed by the Merchant-owned Bureau.

Was this change justified? I submit, as my opinion, that it was.

Why?

Because the function of the privately owned concern has had its limitations—its only objective has been that of seeking to protect the merchant public in its dealings with the consumer.

Now, wherein does the merchant-owned bureau differ?

The latter is actually the heart of the retail credit structure in any community, through which pulsates the buying power of its people.

It therefore becomes a very vital force in the community's life and has within its keeping not only the protection of the merchant but the integrity of the citizens of the community.

Ours is a competitive country. Competition is good and like all good things, may become injurious in its operation.

Competition forces incentive, initiative, work and action. It therefore is a builder of men and of business, but when carried to an extreme, it becomes a destructive force.

There are two points in the forward march of anything in this world, at which time experience has shown it to be wise to surround that thing with safeguards and protection. One, when it is a weakling, and the other, when it is the very opposite, or when it becomes so strong and such a power that there is a liability that its strength will be used for a wrong purpose or when its momentum becomes so great that it is apt to destroy itself.

Now Retail Credit has been expanding very close to the danger mark.

The momentum which retail credit has reached, through competition, has become so great that it is apt to destroy the very foundation upon which it rests, which is CONFIDENCE.

And so the Merchant Owned Credit Bureau has become the Balance Wheel of Credit.

But if it is to function as it should—if it is to exert its power for good in the community, it must go further than merely safeguard credit transaction insofar as, guard credit transactions of the merchant. If it goes no farther it, to my mind, fails in what should be the ultimate purpose of a purely cooperative institution.

What is this ultimate purpose? I should

say the elimination of the so-called "Dead Beat" and the prevention of the individual from taking an Overdose of Credit, thus upholding the integrity of the people of the community.

This can only be accomplished to its fullest extent, I submit, by the merchants themselves, operating through the Bureau.

Why? Because this person whom we are wont to call a "Dead Beat" is, to a very great extent, a subject of evolution, and it is the merchant who is mainly responsible for his existence, and only the merchant, who through close affiliation, can remedy or undo, as it were, his work.

Perhaps some of you, and particularly the Merchant, will conclude that I have made a rather strong accusation and one that is impossible of substantiation. It therefore would seem incumbent on me to at least endeavor to prove my case—to prove to you that the majority of these Dead Beats are manufactured.

I shall start with the assertion that the vast majority of people are honest. If this, my hypothesis, is wrong, my conclusion will likewise be wrong. Proof, however, of the truth of my hypothesis lies in the fact that statistics show that the average personal indebtedness of the individual in this country is about \$300.

From this figure it would appear that there is about 20 billion dollars carried on the books of the retailers of this country. I therefore submit that the vast majority of our people are honest, else this vast business structure could not stand. Then why, may I ask, is this so-called "Dead Beat" class continually increasing? I submit they must be manufactured. How?

First by the wrong extension of credit to the "at the time" honest individual, through allowing him to purchase beyond his ability to liquidate, and secondly by the manner in which collection is thereafter forced.

Let us now for a moment analyze this "Dead Beat."

There is a certain very small percentage of the population who are not merely Dead Beats but who are thieves and criminals by nature, and who use the Charge Account as the only absolutely safe way of procuring what they want without danger of going to jail. To eliminate this class is very difficult.

The balance are actuated by honest intentions. In order that we may properly visualize this class, let us have a picture of him.

Bill Jones is a married man who has lived in the community for a number of years, has a wife and a couple of children, and has an earning capacity of say \$200 a

month. He has been steadily employed and has always borne a good reputation. He has carried charge accounts with his grocer and butcher, has had a few other accounts with the larger stores, and has always met his bills to the satisfaction of his creditors promptly.

He has lived, however, so close to his income that he has but meagre or no accumulations, as is the case with the greater portion of our population.

But there comes a time in the life of Bill Jones, as is the case in all our lives, when something unexpected happens. He loses his position through no fault of his own, or he may have a run of sickness in his family causing unlooked for and necessary expenditures of cash.

Well, Bill loses his position—he is out of work a couple of months and then because he is honest, because he does realize his obligation to his family and to his creditors, he takes the first fairly good offer that is made him and goes to work for \$175.00 a month.

But remember, friends his standard of living has been based on an income of \$200 a month. Now, it is as hard to scale down your accustomed mode of living as it is easy to raise it. I do not doubt but that you have all passed through this phase of life. When your income has increased \$50 a month and you saw your Bank account increasing, you have all been surprised, at the end of a few months to find that your expenses have also risen, and that your increased bank account was only a dream, a really pleasant dream.

Now during the time our Bill has been out of work, he has been unable to meet his obligations. His grocer and butcher, with whom he has traded for years, knowing him to be honest, carry him for a few months. But they cannot continue any one account in that manner beyond a certain limit and self protection causes them to stop. Bill can't and does not blame them.

After he has been working in his new position a month or so each creditor calls on him for money. He hasn't got it but tells them that he appreciates their treatment and that if they will call on the 15th, when he is paid, he will endeavor to have something for them.

He goes home, speaks to his wife, tries to cut down his manner of living, but in most cases it isn't done to any appreciable extent.

When the collectors call he has a few dollars in his pocket and then what happens? Bill's pride asserts itself. He cannot bring himself to offer a few dollars on a \$70 bill. He wants to wait until he has accumulated sufficient to appear like a man with a payment of at least \$10. But, gentlemen, that time never arrives.

Now after his creditors have been put off several times they begin to lose faith in him, with the result that one collection agency gets one bill, another another, and finally Bill is hounded from four or five different

sources, with a likelihood of his present position being jeopardized.

He stands it for a while and then he begins to get angry. For years he has traded with these people and always paid them promptly, and now just because he has had some bad luck and is owing them a few dollars, they are hounding him. He reasons that his first duty is to his family, and he will pay them when he can.

By this time, gentlemen, Bill is souring against the world, thinks it is against him, and has reached the first stage in the evolution of the so-called dead beat.

Until the Merchant owned Credit Bureau has the machinery necessary to care for these unfortunates, it will, I submit, fail in its greatest benefit to the community.

I have thus far tried to picture to you what I feel should be the ideals of the Credit Bureau in a Community and the reasons therefor.

Let us now see how the majority of these bureaus are really operated and, if you please, why they are only partially successful.

Of course the underlying principle, the foundation on which they rest it organization and co-operation.

Now what is organization? One of the best definitions I have ever heard is the following: Organization means the getting together of a homogenous body of men, each one recognizing the responsibility of his individual efforts, and all pulling in the harness, in the same direction to a common end.

And what is the difference between individual effort and cooperation? I would exemplify this by the following which was told me quite a while ago.

When two men work separately, with the same object in view, the value of their work may be stated as one plus one. If they work against each other, the value of their work may be stated as one minus one, or nothing. But when they work together, the value of their work is one plus one squared—or Four.

Co-operative joint effort is not a matter of addition but of multiplication. Organization first, and then loyal, constant, intimate co-operation. Only this will bring success.

I would liken a Merchants organization operating a Credit Bureau to a huge wheel, the merchants supporting being its rim, the central office the hub, and its various spokes the credit men of the various stores. Unless these spokes are possessed or made of the right stuff, unless each spoke of this wheel functions every day in the year as it should what will happen? I need not tell you, friends—you know.

I find that so many people have the faculty of talking co-operation, but fail to exercise co-operation. That co-operation which stops with talk, that co-operation which is only spasmodic, is not the co-operation which can spell success.

I find that too many credit men fail to realize that a merchant owned bureau as at

present constructed is but one department of their office; that information should flow to it with as much regularity and precision as to their bookkeeping department. There is a vast difference between co-operation, and "applied co-operation", and unless it is applied, well—whats the use?

Generally speaking, if your bureau does not function properly it is because those who make up its integral parts are not functioning properly. There is another very important reason which is due to the very manner of its organization.

It has been truthfully said that "what is everybody's business is nobody's business". Well, to some credit men, the Bureau's business seems to be everybody's business. The manager is not allowed sufficient authority while the board of directors are supposed to direct him, this authority is too often usurped by individual credit men. Remember, it is easy to criticise; it is hard to perform. These credit men usually know but little concerning the detailed workings of the Bureau.

Then there is another class of credit men who look upon the Bureau as their child, and like most parents they are too apt to sound the praises of their children and delude themselves in to the belief that the child is the acme of perfection; or, knowing his faults, bear with them because they know that they are of their own making and do not want to expend the energy necessary to correct them.

The Bureau Manager should be a man of high ideals—he must love the work, and to a certain extent be satisfied with the good he can accomplish by virtue of his position, for most Bureaus are run without profit and the managers therefore do not have the incentive to perform that men have in business run for profit.

While I am a firm believer in the merchant owned credit bureau, as I glance from time to time over the reports that emanate from a great many merchant owned credit bureaus I am forced to the conclusion that there must come a change in their method of operation if they wish to hold their rightful place in the economic life of the community.

My reason for this statement is born of the fact that thus far the majority of them have failed to grasp the fullness of their being.

The Ledger Clearance idea was the basis upon which they were founded. Even at this late day they are furnishing little else. The result is that credit grantors have come to rely to too great an extent, in the extension of credit, on clearances alone. It is a vital error, and one that will reflect itself, sooner or later, in their Profit and Loss Account.

If it were possible to at all times have a full and complete clearance of the buying activities of every individual, I perhaps would be inclined to temper my statement. But this is rarely ever possible.

So long as Genevieve and Mary have

clearances that denote fair promptness in payment, experience has shown that a credit man, in his anxiety to use his department as a selling device, will pass a credit, despite the fact that he has knowledge that they have established credit in several different stores and without knowing proper facts as to their resources and responsibility.

The Ledger Clearance is only one part of a proper report. I submit that the merchant-owned bureau must be so equipped as to render a fuller service to the merchant than the majority of them are now doing. They must, if they wish to function properly, report on antecedents, character, earning capacity and financial responsibility, in addition to the ledger clearance record.

They must endeavor to cater to the smaller merchant in the community and to give him service at a very small expense so that finally all credit information will flow into one office. They must, if needs be, serve

the small merchant at a loss in an earnest effort to educate him to a proper use of his capital in credit extension. This will react to the benefit of the larger merchant for the only competition he need fear is that born of ignorance.

In conclusion, I wish to go on record as stating that I am proud to be at the helm of the Retailers Credit Association of San Francisco. I know of no other position which carries with it more of an opportunity to be of service to my fellow men.

Most every day we find ourselves helping some one on his journey, bringing him to a realization of what is best for him, and thus assisting him in the preservation of his integrity and that of his family.

Look upon your Bureaus in this light, assist its management in the fulfillment of these ideals, and each day will find us in the possession of more happiness and at the same time uplifting the standards of our profession.

#### SPOKANE WANTS THE NATIONAL CONVENTION IN 1925

Below is shown part of the delegation of Spokane retail credit men about to embark on their special car to attend the north-west conference held May 15th and 16th at Seattle. In addition to the nineteen in the picture four others had gone on ahead. While at the conference the Spokane men announced they wanted the national convention in 1925. (The year of the World's fair at Portland) and were given the support of the Pacific Northwest Conference.

In the picture from left to right (Standing) are: J. Moss, O. K. Moody, Otto Allgaier, Will G. Hooker, J. Frank Jefferson, president Spokane Association; C. B. Laughlin, A. R. Charles, C. R. Dahn, D. A. Johnson, V. G. Shinkle, E. F. Baird, R. W. Watson, Thomas McCormick, Guy Hebbard.

Kneeling—Nathan Anderson, Frank Shockley, H. A. Replogle, C. F. Roadnight, H. E. Rich.

Others at the conference from Spokane were N. M. MacLeod, A. A. Salmon, L. R. Harvey and Lee Libby.



## COLLECTIONS

SEND  
YOUR  
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TO

## The MERCHANTS ASSOCIATION of FRESNO

Established 1906

Owned and Controlled by  
356 Merchants of Fresno

### *Bonded Employees*

Our References:  
Any Merchant or Bank in Fresno

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MANAGER COLLECTION DEPT.

## Get the Full Benefit of Membership—

¶ The Association's Emblem is your symbol of protection. Get a membership sign and display it prominently in your office or store.

¶ Finished in gold and black on cream colored celluloid with metal back and bronze chain hanger. Size 4" x 8". Will not tarnish. Price fifty cents.



Order from  
National Office



*"He cannot become our debtor until  
he pays your bill."*

## **"BUT, DO THEY GET RESULTS?"**

We can unequivocally answer: "We do."

We will give references (on request) who  
will answer: "They do."

### **BUT THAT IS NOT ENOUGH!**

We want you—ALL OF YOU—to know that our  
COLLECTION DEPARTMENT has grown from TWO employees  
(one of whom was an attorney) in 1919 to EIGHT (including  
two attorneys) in 1922.

#### **OUR RATES:**

25 per cent of net amount collected if debtor resides in Los  
Angeles or vicinity;

33½ per cent of net amount collected if we find it necessary  
to get through a correspondent.

No additional fee for suit.

*Why hesitate? Send that list  
of claims--NOW!*

*(Always send itemized statements in duplicate)*

## **Retail Merchants Credit Association**

300-310 I. W. Hellman Building  
LOS ANGELES

## **For Your Protection--**



The Association's Emblem  
is your symbol  
of protection. Get a  
membership sign and  
display it prominently  
in your office or  
store.

Finished in  
gold and black  
on cream col-  
ored celluloid with  
metal back and bronze  
chain hanger. Size  
4x8 in. Will not tar-  
nish. Price fifty cents.



Order from  
National Office



# Report of the New England Conference of Retail Credit Grantors and Service Exchange Bureaus

By Edward W. Manahan

Wednesday, May 10, 1922, was inaugurated at Worcester, Mass., the most memorable gathering of New England credit grantors since the National Convention held in Boston four years ago next August.

The great enthusiasm manifested by the one hundred and thirty delegates, was in no small measure due to the excellent program of most important credit subjects so ably introduced by Chairman Louis T. McMahon of Wm. Filene's Sons Co., Boston, and the quiz master, national director, and past national president, Sidney E. Blandford.

A tribute to the masterful way in which this first New England Group Conference was conducted was well expressed by the enthusiastic sustained interest of all present right up to the close of the last address on the program at which time a vote was taken to hold a similar conference every six months. This aroused a keen rivalry between Providence and Springfield for the next meeting place, with Providence winning in a closely contested vote.

Then, as a crowning achievement, arose a great discussion as the sentiment of the meeting for the designation of the place for 1923 National Convention of Retail Credit Men's National Association. Two most cordial invitations were extended; one from Springfield, Mass., and one from Providence, R. I., each presenting the beauties and accommodations of their respective cities which discussion growing warmer all the while required all the diplomatic skill of the both Messrs. McMahon and Blandford to maintain order.

After a keen half hour of heated debate the Providence delegates received the greatly prized vote of the assembly as the city for 1923 convention and Springfield was selected as the next city for the second group conference which will be held next fall.

Surely Worcester with her splendid Hotel Bancroft, furnished every possible convenience including the finest of clear warm May days imaginable.

Starting a little behind time, owing to delay in registering the many delegates, Chairman McMahon opened the conference with a short address clearly outlining the purposes of the conference which was followed by a kindly welcome from the Mayor of the city, The honorable Mr. Sullivan, whose well chosen words of wisdom on credits and the importance of retail credit grantors were worthy of the splendid city whose greeting he extended.

As a fitting tribute to our New England National Director, Mr. Sidney E. Bland-

ford of the R. H. White Co., of Boston who has labored so long and so hard for the advancement of the credit man's profession, honor of the first subject was accorded to him.

Chairman McMahon's introduction of Mr. Blandford was truthfully exemplified in Mr. Blandford's wonderful portrayal of "The Possibilities and Advantages of Greater Cooperation among the Credit grantors and Reporting Bureaus of New England. Needless to say there was a little left unsaid by Mr. Blandford on this important subject which was further ably illustrated by his searching questions as quiz master.

Mr. J. J. Pincus, Credit Manager of the Outlet Co., Providence, R. I., presented an excellent address on "Standardizing Credit and Collection Methods" informing the delegates of the crying need in these modern times of the best manner of handling this difficult question and the splendid success Providence achieved through bureau co-operation.

"The Credit Man—His Profession and Opportunities in Business Building"—was beautifully expressed by David E. Moeser, Treasurer, Conrad & Co., Boston, who admonished the credit man to enlarge upon the splendid broadening field of his endeavors, mentally holding aloof from the pettiness with which some would seek to circumscribe his position lest he be limiting his capacity for the successful performance for himself and his house, the largest possible field for advancement in retail distribution. No one is better able to speak of this than the past president of The Retail Credit Men's Association of Boston, who has not alone personally advanced from credit to merchandise manager, but has become a member of the firm of Conrad & Co. As secretary of The Controllers Group he shaped the rapid progress and destiny of the controllers in their great work of standardized retail accounting methods.

"Co-ordinating the Credit and Sales Organizations" was clearly portrayed by Mr. Charles E. Donilon, Credit Manager Callender, McAuslan & Troup Co., Providence, R. I., who showed how successfully his house and others of Providence had advantageously solved this trying problem.

"Taking the Application for Credit"—the approach—the interview—how to obtain the information desired—was masterfully handled by Charles Martin, Assistant Credit Manager, Forbes & Wallace, Springfield, Mass. who constructively built up a process of investigation by courteous questions that

fully revealed the antecedents, character and net worth of the credit applicant.

Adjourning at one o'clock for an exceedingly interesting Group Luncheon skillfully arranged by the National Group Luncheon Assistant Chairman, W. J. Starr of Boston, there were assembled in the respective groups delegates from thirty-eight dry goods stores, twenty-two women's specialty shops, women's, children's, and babies' apparel houses, nine men's clothing houses, shoe stores, and furnishers, eight retail coal dealers, gas and electric appliance houses, seven credit houses, etc., five furniture houses, fourteen credit bureaus and secretaries, five bank and insurance houses, thirteen houses dealing in various sporting goods, lumber, musical instruments, jewelry, and store service, eight laundry, grocery, milk, and dental supply houses, one pressed aluminum house, and three members of the press, a total of one hundred and thirty.

The afternoon session was opened by the fine address of Philip J. Murphy, Secretary, Associated Retail Credit Men of Worcester, and secretary of this group conference. His subject, "When to use a Special Report and the Information it Should Contain," was greatly appreciated and led to many illuminating questions which were well answered.

Wm. Browne, Credit Manager, C. F. Hovey Co., Boston, Mass., almost threw a bomb shell into the service exchange fellows in his straight out from the shoulder address—"Local and Inter-city Reference Clearances." It suffices to say he called a spade a spade and put the bureau men on edge to answer.

"Maintaining the Maximum per cent of Collections Without Losing Business" was a subject most ably handled by Alfred C. Moreau, Credit Manager, E. S. Brown Co., Fall River, Mass., who explained in outline the successful methods devised by his house for handling satisfactorily this all important index of the credit man's work.

"Meeting Present Business Conditions in Opening New Accounts" furnished Cornelius A. Brosnan, Treasurer, Worcester Pressed Aluminum Co., the splendid opportunity to show his fellow credit men what has happened in the present period of reconstruction to the ratings of former desirable patrons, how rating books are dead and how to cautiously proceed in granting new credit limits in the light of the 1922 financial outlook.

Genial James Wilson was on deck with a most excellent instructive address on "Keep-

## An Efficient and Responsible Collection Organization

*owned and controlled by  
the Retail Merchants of  
San Francisco*

**Solicits your  
Collections—**



**ADJUSTMENT  
DEPARTMENT**

**Retailer's  
Credit Ass'n**

112 Kearny St.  
SAN FRANCISCO, CALIF.

ing Accounts within the Limits—control in authorization”—explaining how, as credit manager of the Denholm & McKay Co., Worcester, Mass., he invented a system of color signals and danger flags, giving a visible tell tale for every account. Needless to say there were a good many questions and much useful information acquired.

Milton A. Stone Counsel, Beacon Adjustment Co., Springfield, gave an address such as only a good lawyer can on the question of losses through bad debts which may be summed up in his words of wisdom to credit men—"Don't let the accounts get too old before taking action. Take time by the forelock and doubtful accounts by the ear" expressed his advice for the slow birds.

Providence surely did show good old Boston a few things in the address of Charles F. Sheldon, Assistant Manager Providence Retail Credit Bureau. Well-constructed, well-balanced, efficiently operated with good team work is this Providence Bureau, pleasing both customer and merchant with speed and thoroughness. If you are from Missouri accept Providence's invitation to the 1923 convention. They will show you.

Then commenced the fireworks before-mentioned and a happy ending of seven well spent hours on vital retail credit subjects.

Immediately following was the banquet at 6:30 with the Worcester Association acting as host, Chairman McMahon presiding and

Raymond B. Fletcher President of the Associated Retail Credit Men extending the greeting of the Worcester Association. The president of the Chamber of Commerce, Dr. Knapp extended in the absence of the mayor the greetings of the city of Worcester, Mr. Sidney E. Blandford, Past President of National Association of Retail Credit Men and Credit Manager of R. H. White Co., Boston, extending the greetings from the National Association, reviewing its wonderful growth during the past ten years, its great accomplishments in the development of retail credit work and its splendid progress for the correction of retail credit abuses. Mr. Blandford's most sincere invitation to all present to attend the national convention in Cleveland was received with enthusiastic applause. Thomas E. Babb, Jr., of Worcester, Governor New England Kiwanis Clubs made a masterly address "America's Watchword to the Business Men of Today," and Mr. Walter Hawkins, Director of Jordan Marsh Co., Boston, addressed the delegates, "The Personal Administration," a subject of great interest charmingly presented by the leading personnel administrator of New England—his job and his hobby all in one.

The dinner closed with songs on paying bill habits sung to the tune of popular airs. These songs were specially written for the convention by the Worcester Associated Credit Men.

## ECONOMIZE

### MR. CREDIT MANAGER:

You can collect your old, charged off accounts, notes and judgments at less expense through our service than it costs you to handle ordinary delinquent accounts by your regular office methods. This statement is proven from the experience of thousands of our clients on practically all classes of credits.

In using our service you are guaranteed results or it costs you nothing.  
No additional office work.  
No letters to dictate.  
No commissions or lawyers fees to be paid.  
All money paid direct to creditor, not to us.  
Your money and accounts are always in *your* possession.

#### BRANCHES

Brooklyn, N. Y.  
Chicago, Ill.  
Kansas City, Mo.  
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#### PRINCIPAL OFFICES:

1026-30 TITLE GUARANTY BUILDING  
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Agents wanted in other districts

#### BRANCHES

Memphis, Tenn.  
Cleveland, Ohio.  
Binghamton, N. Y.  
Des Moines, Iowa.

Agents wanted in other districts

## "Opening the Account"

*Address of Erwin Kant, Credit Manager E. Schuster & Co., Milwaukee, at the Wisconsin State Conference, May 8, 1922*

IT CAN safely be said that the opening of a charge account is the most important function in the conducting of a Credit Department. By using the proper judgment in handling this phase of the credit work you will successfully increase your sales and maintain a higher collection percentage, thereby showing a decrease in your losses.

Great importance is attached to the manner in which a customer is interviewed when placing application for an account, as a great deal of tact and diplomacy is required. As the customers first impression of you is a lasting one it is necessary that your approach is of such a nature that the customer will feel at home. If that effect has been accomplished it is then an easy matter to obtain all the information which you desire without having the customer feel that too much information is being asked for. By having this personal interview with a customer the Credit Man has an opportunity of forming his opinion as to the applicant's responsibility as a credit risk, which will assist him in passing on the account when the necessary reports are received. As this is of great importance I personally feel that all parties desiring an account should be interviewed by someone in the Credit Department who has been thoroughly trained in this line of work and not have sales people handle this work as is being done at the present time by some concerns. As it is necessary for the Credit Man to use his best judgment at all times he therefore must consider each case individually and if he sees fit will waive all questioning if the party applying for credit is known as having a very good credit standing in the community.

If possible at the time application for credit is placed, the following valuable information should be obtained:

### Name and Address:

A very essential point in taking an application is to secure the customer's name in full instead of using the initial for the given name as is often done. It is a good practice to have customer give the correct spelling of the last name and necessary to be very careful in getting the correct address. Also ascertain whether or not the applicant owns property, rooms or rents. If party has resided only a short time at the address given it is well to get the former address. This information is very valuable if it becomes necessary to trace the customer at some future time. If you feel satisfied that your records are correct as to the name and address you will then be in a position to give your customer the best of service, and in case a charge is presented at any time

when the name does not correspond with your records you can safely ask customer to call at credit office for an explanation.

### Business Address:

Just as it is very important to get applicant's name and address correctly it is also equally important to get the name of the firm and the capacity in which they serve them, also length of time party has been connected with that particular company; if for only a short time it is well to obtain information as to former connections. This information gives the Credit Man an opportunity to judge the responsibility of this particular applicant and also gives him an idea as to his earning capacity. If the party has been connected with a firm for a considerable length of time the Credit Man can feel that he is dealing with a party who should be a good credit risk.

### References:

It should also be a rule to ask a customer to furnish references which cover other stores, banks and other personal references. As Milwaukee is very fortunate in having an up to date and efficient credit bureau it is immaterial whether or not customer is reticent in furnishing us with the necessary references as we feel satisfied that our Credit Bureau records are complete and that they will be able to furnish us with their present credit standing throughout the city. Personal references play a minor part in the opening of a charge account, but prove very valuable when trying to trace customer.

### Terms:

A definite understanding should be had with the customer at the time the application is placed as to terms, so that no dispute can arise after the account has been opened as to the manner in which payments should be made.

### Signature:

At the time application is placed for credit it is advisable to ask customer for signature, for if signature is obtained it will help to settle any question at any future time as to who placed the application for the account, as well as having its moral effect. Frequently identification has been made through the customer's signature obtained when opening the account.

### Reports, Limit and Final Closing Letter:

After the application has been properly filled out, in order to corroborate what information customer has given, it will be found necessary to obtain further information through the available mercantile agencies. When the reports have been returned they should be verified with information received from the customer. After this has been

done the credit man is then in position to act on the application by either accepting or refusing.

The next important step is to place the limit on the account. The limit that is placed on an account should only be known by the credit department and people handling the accounts. As most customers stay within the limits that have been placed it is well to observe these limits carefully and immediately advise those that are exceeding the amounts set. After the application has been acted upon whether refused or accepted, a letter is sent to the customer acquainting them with that fact. If the account is accepted an identification card is mailed with the letter. This card is to be used by customer when making purchases on charge. If the account has been refused great care should be exercised so as not to offend the customer but retain his good will and hold his future business on a cash basis.

## BUSINESS IS SETTING A HIGHER VALUE ON ITS "CREDIT MAN"

By E. B. Irwin

Gen. Mgr. Caheen Bros., Pres. Merchants Credit Association

THERE was a time when the proprietor looked upon the credit department as a semi-protection against losses, and the credit manager acquiesced in this valuation. The last ten years have witnessed a remarkable change in the status of the "Credit Man." Out of our sour misanthrope has evolved the tactful, aggressive business getter.

The highly organized credit associations, or bureaus, have been made possible only by the co-operation of the intelligent, active, and efficient credit managers. With the avenues of information opened up by these associations, it is possible to secure a very large measure of protection against the professional dead-beat who one time preyed upon legitimate business.

Aside from the profits which inure to his business by the avoidance of bad risks, the information available from the concentration of credit information enables him to safely increase the volume of business by solicitation of desirable accounts. The applicant for credit who possesses a good rating with the credit associations is favorably impressed with a ready "Yes." The well-posted credit man will be in a position to know, either personally or by reputation, the local people who have such ratings and this knowledge gives him splendid opportunity to cultivate good will for the firm.

We can easily nullify the effect of the best advertising and the best salesmanship, therefore, let us be eternally on the alert and use with good judgment the power that has been placed in our hands.

—Reprinted from "Billy Dues"—monthly bulletin of Merchants Credit Ass'n., Birmingham, Ala.



# Publicity Pays Others Tell You How To Do It! This Booklet Will Help You Do It

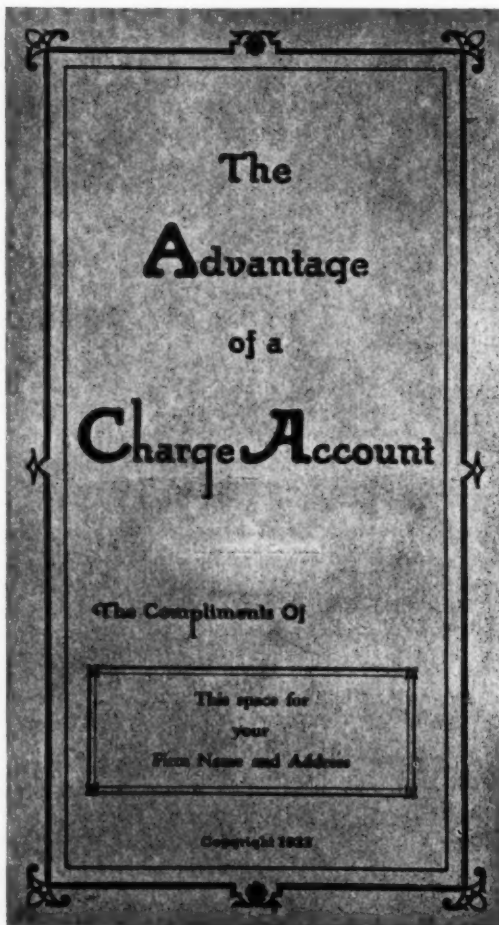
Enclosed with a well written request to your established customers for their cooperation, it functions as an unparalleled tacit solicitor for new accounts and new business.

The subject of credit in this booklet has been handled in a very thorough and effective manner, and it will be read with interest and carefully considered. It is not only instructive and entertaining—but it will create a desire to do business with your store, as it portrays the use of credit in a new light to the retail buying public.

It will advertise your store as no other medium, that of mouth to ear. Such advertising registers, for the voice of the people is a voice of thunder.

The number of solicitors for new customers will be limited only by the number of satisfied customers whose cooperation you seek. This request for cooperation is flattering, and will feed the flame of new business.

It will attract the attention of customers whose accounts have been inactive, by their established connection with your credit service; thereby exercising the warmth confidence begets to thaw out a frozen account.



Actual Size 3 3/4" x 6 1/2" — 8 Pages and Cover

Use it, and you, as a live credit manager, will have set a pace for your competitors in which you will already be one step in advance in this marathon for volume.

Use it, and you are appealing directly to your customers for their support and are making them firmer friends of the firm.

Use it, and you will stimulate sales by increasing the purchasing power of prospective customers.

Use it, and because of its educational features, you will accelerate collections—and that means more purchasing power for your own buyers.

Use it, and it will prove a wedge to drive home your letters to delinquents and slow pays.

Use it, and your department will be viewed in a new light by your sales department—your cooperation will be appreciated—and the stores-sales will increase; and in that we are all vitally interested.

Consider the effect a sales-promotion business-puller of this aggressive type will have; its creative power to increase prestige—to incite buying; and write us today for our quantity price list and details of our plan.

**THE RETAIL CREDIT MEN'S BUSINESS BUREAU**  
625 WOODWARD AVENUE  
DETROIT



# Sales Auditing

By M. T. Coogan,  
Schreiber, Johnson Co., Sioux Falls, S. D.

Two years ago this Association met at Watertown. During the banquet at the Lincoln Hotel, the question box was presided over by Mr. Ware. I remember one of the questions asking for twenty leaks in retailing. The answers were furnished by merchants in all parts of the room and twenty leaks were enumerated. Not a merchant mentioned dishonesty.

It seems that merchants either do not realize this evil or they are reluctant to discuss it. Mr. Berdahl has allotted this subject to me and it has been with a great deal of interest that I have prepared this informal talk.

When a man like W. E. Wilkinson, Secretary of the Detroit Merchants Association, who has had considerable experience along these lines, states that "80% of the stealing of money and merchandise is from dishonest employees and only 20% from shop lifters and miscellaneous sources," you can readily see to what large proportion this evil has grown, and realize how much of it has not been discovered.

The President of one of the largest Auditing Companies told me that they have found dishonesty in 90% of the stores audited. Just think that in 90% of the stores they check they are able to find thievery in some form.

Temptation is a difficult evil to overcome, and while many of us may feel that we are not our brother's keeper, we may yet have to answer for our lax methods and the lack of supervision whereby we actually place temptation in the way of our employees. To illustrate: In the Sixteenth Century there lived a Master who had a Servant, who was the pride of the palace. He was able to anticipate nearly all of the Master's needs and had served him for many years. One day to test the Servant, the Master placed a gold sovereign on the table and left the room. On his return the gold piece was gone. The Servant was then hauled into the Court and the Magistrate upon hearing both sides gave three months at hard labor to the Master for placing temptation before the Servant.

Let us not forget that evil under the guise of good is our natural tendency. The baby sees an object and it stretches out its hands to take it. There is no thought of the property rights of others. The fact that it wants that certain object is sufficient. The baby must be carefully trained to respect the rights of others. The hold-up man does not commit a wrong for the wrong's sake, he has an object in view. Therefore, let us not place temptation before our employees.

The quotation from Boswell's Life of Johnson is truer today than when written:

"Now in so far as you approach tempta-

tion to a man you do him an injury, and if he is overcome you share his guilt."

We expect and are confident that all our own clerks are honest. Let us take ourselves for an example. Who knows, absolutely, that I am honest or that you are dishonest? None but ourselves as individuals can answer that question in its fullest sense. In thinking of our own town we all know of one clerk, or perhaps more, that is working in another store who is dishonest. While we are positive that all the clerks in our own store are honest, some other merchant in town may know that one of our own is not.

I know personally five or six salespeople who have left our store at our request, and from whom we have received signed confessions, that are working in other stores in town and handling money. Their employers of course have never checked their references and I feel quite sure that such employers are losing money. In fact one of these employers came to me a few days ago to find out why we let one girl out. He was having trouble but he waited a year to check her references.

We have found clerks taking merchandise during a period of years, clerks we would have least suspected. One had been carrying home bolts of ribbon for nearly two years. When we searched the house we found bolt after bolt of ribbon which had never been used and I suppose that she had no idea of using it, but it seemed too easy to take and the clerk fell for the temptation.

Nearly all peculations start in a very small way as a loan. I have in mind a case where a clerk borrowed one dollar from the register for some small item that was thought needed for a party, intending of course to put it back pay day. In the meantime, she found that the customers often paid her even change and walked out without receipts. As the supervision was lax, she found it very easy to pass up recording the sale. This gradually led to her taking so much every day until discovered.

I know another case where a cashier pilfered from twenty to thirty dollars a day for over a month, before being discovered. Here is a case where the cashier read the adding counters and forced her own cash balance by reducing the amount of money shown on the register totals and pocketing what was wanted. The adding counters were turned back before the employer could see it. When discovered, the auditor added the detail strip for each day's business and arrived at the shortage very quickly.

The merchandising problem is peculiar. In the larger stores, employees' purchases are sent to a central desk and are given to them on leaving the store and they are not allowed to carry packages in or out of their

departments, but this method cannot be used in the smaller stores. In some of the smaller stores every clerk must have a charge account and no cash sales are allowed. The employer can check up the purchases if he so desires. Dishonest employees will give packages to their friends to carry out for them and will secrete merchandise upon their persons and carry it out of the store at the close of hours. Observation is practically the only method of detection. Sometimes honest employees will tell you of their suspicions, and, sometimes when dishonest employees have confessed to taking money, they will also confess to taking merchandise, or, in order to "beg off," will tell of some other employee whom they know is taking merchandise. Constant observation and the following up of every clue or suspicion will help overcome this great evil.

As to cash sales, a great deal depends upon the method employed by the store to handle and record the cash transactions.

In order that we may more fully understand some of the various methods of handling cash let us enumerate some of them:

- A—Cash drawer—common.
- B—Cash drawer—with sales books.
- C—Cash drawer controlled by cashier—customer or clerk pays cashier.
- D—Common cash register—individual cash drawer register.

There are many other methods or systems employing a combination of those mentioned above, but these few will suffice for the purpose of this talk.

## A—Common Cash Drawer

The biggest chance for leaks and one that should strike home to every employer is that he must accept the money found in this cash drawer at the close of the day's business as his cash receipts. The money is uncounted and unbalanced, and in view of the fact that several employees have access to it, allows a good opportunity to escape detection. Also, honest clerks are under suspicion and it leads to dispute with customers. The greatest difficulty of all is the fact that there is no method known to ascertain that the money secured from sales actually finds its way into the cash drawer. Very few merchants are operating under such a system. If they are, they are working for their clerks instead of their clerks working for them.

## B—Cash Drawer With Sales Books.

The only difference from the preceding method is that the employers imagine a protection that does not exist. The protection is imaginary because there is no way of enforcing correct records. If a customer pays an even amount the clerk may forget to make out a sales ticket resulting in a cash average or may deliberately keep the money or make

the sales check for a smaller amount and pocket the difference. The sales slip is of considerable protection over the open drawer as the clerk does not know whether or not the customer is going to give clerk even change.

There is no particular way of balancing because slips may become lost through the carelessness of clerks and poorly written sales figures. Upon investigation you will find the cash is always over. Many merchants feel that as long as the cash is over everything is all right. But is it? Employees who have a tendency to be dishonest readily see how hard it is to balance and because of the number of other clerks involved in handling the money do not fear detection.

*C—Cash Drawer Controlled By Cashier—Clerk or Customer Pays Cashier.*

In many cases the merchant imagines full protection and in his sense of security he fails to check the cashier and there is no possible way for the cashier to know exactly what the clerk has sold. To a certain extent the pilfering has moved from the clerk to the cashier. Collusion between these two has often resulted in peculations extending over a long period of time.

Where the customer is handed a sales ticket to pay the cashier it has been found that she has walked out without paying. Cashiers have destroyed sales slips stating that the customers have walked out. In most cases the cashier is allowed to balance her own cash and the merchant naturally takes her word and even if the merchant balances the cash he is not sure of the fact that he is in possession of all of the sales slips.

Also, a customer can make two separate purchases and only pay one to the cashier causing a heavy drain and there are many unscrupulous customers who are ready to take advantage of this method. The merchant to a certain extent is at the mercy of the cashier. Not long ago a cashier of a good sized store stated that it was not her job to spy on the clerks and she would just check up what cash was turned in.

If the clerk pays the cashier she may fail to make the sales slip and call the amount to the cashier, thereby working in collusion. The clerk may make the original sales slip for a lesser amount than one wrapped in with the customer's goods and keep the balance of the change.

The best method known to insure merchant's protection where salesbooks are used is the adoption of a triplicate sales-book. The original for the cashier, the duplicate goes to the customer and the triplicate remains in the book. These books are numbered and every sales slip in the book bears a number of a tally or index, which is turned in to the office each evening. The employer or auditor can check these tallies or indexes against the original slips turned in by cashier and the missing sales slips are investigated.

*D—Cash Register.*

On the cash register system it seems to be the general idea that they work themselves, that they are "fool proof" and require very little or no attention.

It has been hard for me to understand why merchants invest such sums of money in a machine designed to keep their cash records with the best possible protection, and then fail to supervise it properly. There is one thing wrong with a cash register. It requires supervision and lots of it. If the merchants would honestly study their registers they would find these machines can do many things but will not run themselves.

Registers afford the best possible publicity for each sale but registers can be beaten like any other system, in two or three ways:—By failure to report sale: recording an amount less than the sale, and by allowing the cashier or individuals operating to balance their own cash, and thereby giving them the opportunity to force their balances. We have found where customers are in a hurry and with an even change sale walk off with the goods leaving the money in the hands of the clerk. The clerk in many cases will ring up the sale primarily because the register rings and records the sale.

It is true that amounts smaller than the actual purchases are recorded and the difference pocketed by the clerk.

But the figures cannot be manipulated other than by forcing the cash balance at night.

But when you see the vast number of merchants who do not insist upon receipts being given the customers and where in many cases, the detail slip is not placed upon the register, or, if it is not taken off and balanced every night, where employers allow the clerks to balance and turn back the adding counters; it would be just as good to use the old fashioned till, because then at least you are not so confident and will watch for thievery.

How many merchants really study their detail strips every night? Those who do not, try it for a week or so and perhaps great surprises may be in store for you.

How many have their registers in a far off corner or have cards or signs over the place where the sales are indicated for the benefit of the customer, thereby making it possible for employees to ring up any amount they desire? These things are worthy of thought and supervision.

There is another great leak which is worthy of attention. There are as many ways of "beating" the merchants on cash disbursements or "paid outs" as on receipts. We will just name a few for your attention. Using cash register receipts—which are found as a basis of a refund, also having receipts marked "void" even though the sale has been made and recorded, memoranda for express, etc.

We have now considered the weakness of the various systems from the common cash

drawer to the highest priced register; tube stations or salesbooks and the faults of human nature. It leads us to ask ourselves, is there any modern method that will correct these evils, take away the temptation and help us bring our system up to a point where we feel sure that we will receive one hundred cents for every dollars worth of merchandise sold. And I say that there is a modern method and that is a Sales Audit. Now, what is a Sales Audit and how will it help us?

A Sales Audit is a thorough investigation by experts to discover and correct the weak points in our sales system of recording sales, an investigation to discover the honesty and efficiency of our employees. A modern sales audit will guarantee us a system of handling our sales transactions that will not only insure the fact that all sales are properly recorded but that the salespeople are working at the highest possible efficiency.

The Sales Audit is handled in this manner: A modern sales audit corporation employs men and women trained in retail shopping and the general Sales Auditor is a man experienced in judging human nature and with a full knowledge of the different systems used in retail stores throughout the country. You can readily see how a man with this knowledge and experience is in a position to offer valuable suggestions for the improvement of your store. The auditors who shop or buy are not known even to the merchant who employs them. They appear in the store as ordinary customers. They buy goods, giving to the clerk money in excess of the sale so that in order to give the change it is necessary to record the transaction and give the auditor a receipt. The next sale is usually for even change and the auditor walks off with the purchases, without waiting for a receipt. The temptation is therefore placed before the clerk and if the clerk is dishonest, the money will be kept.

The sales that are made are carefully listed by the clerk, department, items purchased, amount of purchase and the time. This sales report is checked against the record turned in to the office by the salespeople and any difference noted. Clerks showing discrepancies are shopped the second and third time and are then called to the office and interviewed. During this interview confessions are made covering stealing of both money and merchandise. Some times this thievery has been going on for years.

A Sales Audit is not to be considered as an expense. You owe it to your business to stop all losses and when you realize that it has been estimated that this thievery amounts to one million dollars daily, Retail Merchants cannot afford to suffer the loss.

The honest salespeople are entitled to this protection and you will find that it will keep the weaker ones from falling into temptation. Ourselves, profits, employees—all must be taken into consideration.

# The Financial Digest

By *W. Ries*  
Research Division

## STOCK PRICES

	April		March
	1922	1921	1922
25 Industrials (Average)	\$94.44	\$85.38	\$89.30
25 Railroads	61.59	51.26	58.15

## RAILROADS

	1922	1921
Gross Earnings	\$473,000,000	\$457,000,000
Operating Expense	359,000,000	398,000,000
Net Earnings	\$114,000,000	\$ 59,000,000

	April	March
	1922	1921
Coal (Bituminous)		
Production (in tons)	15,700,000	28,300,000

## COMMODITY PRICES

	1922	1921	1922
Wheat	\$ 1.38	\$ 1.46	\$ 1.35
Cotton	.18	.12	.18
Coal (Anthracite Retail)	14.89	14.87	14.89

	1922	1921	1920	March 1922
<b>Bank Clearings</b>				
169 Cities	\$33,000,000,000	\$28,000,000,000	\$37,000,000,000	
Outside New York	14,000,000,000	13,000,000,000	15,000,000,000	
<b>New York Stock Exchange</b>				
Shares Nos.	30,000,000	15,000,000	27,000,000	
Bonds \$	460,000,000	230,000,000	340,000,000	
<b>Foreign Trade</b>				
Exports	321,000,000	339,000,000		332,000,000
Imports	217,000,000	254,000,000		258,000,000
Excess of Exports	104,000,000	85,000,000		74,000,000
<b>Failures</b>				
Number	2,100	1,400	500	2,400
Liabilities \$	73,000,000	38,500,000	13,200,000	71,000,000
<b>Cotton in Bales</b>				
Domestic Consumption	440,000	400,000	560,000	510,000
Export	610,000	310,000	540,000	460,000

## Co-operate, Foreign Gov't & Municipal Financing

	1922	1921	1920	1919
New Capital	470,000,000	180,000,000	340,000,000	
Refunding	80,000,000	10,000,000	20,000,000	
Total	550,000,000	190,000,000	360,000,000	
<b>Unfilled Steel Orders</b>				
April (tons)	5,000,000	5,800,000	10,300,000	4,800,000
	April	March		
<b>Building Permits</b>				
101 Cities \$	181,400,000	128,800,000	218,600,000	

## COURTESIES AID COLLECTIONS

Dealers who sell on the installment plan are still having considerable difficulty in making collections, and the goods, in many instances, are being replevined. Quite often a writ of replevin is issued without careful thought and not only is a heavy loss incurred by the lessor, but an injustice is done to the lessee. There are many worthy debtors who have been unable to meet their obligations because their income has been greatly reduced, or cut off entirely. But this is only a temporary condition and they will pay as they are able.

This class of debtors should be granted a reasonable extension, for their intentions are good and the situation can be handled to the best advantage by a co-operative plan. The lessor should always consider it an expensive procedure to take a claim into court and, furthermore, the recovered goods have deteriorated and have small value. It is therefore advantageous to wait a little longer for payments and thereby receive a settlement in full.

The matter of good will should also be given consideration, for the customer who is hard pressed today will later be in the market for more goods, when perhaps he is in good shape financially. If the friendly relationship has not been maintained, the purchase will likely be made elsewhere. When the credit man expresses confidence in a customer and shows clearly he is anxious to co-operate, it places an added sense of responsibility on the customer to liquidate his indebtedness at the earliest possible date. The average man appreciates good treatment and when opportunity arises for him to reciprocate will not lose sight of the courtesy extended him.

There is another type of debtor who cannot conveniently pay his installments, but it does not worry him, and he is unwilling to sacrifice to carry out his contracts. He will take all the time allowed him and then ask for more. The longer the account remains standing, it seems, the less inclined he is to give it serious consideration. To get results from such debtors, it is necessary to give them a definite time in which to make at least a partial settlement and, if the payment is not forthcoming, to use other methods. If they are employed, a visit at their offices has often proved effective. The credit department should exhaust every available resource to get payments made before resorting to legal measures.

The most difficult debtor to cope with is the one who has no intention whatsoever to pay, and the only way to get any satisfaction is through courts, or by finding some way of reaching him which will give him a strong incentive to pay.

In installment collections it is important to classify delinquent debtors and govern your action accordingly.—Reprinted from Philadelphia Public Ledger.

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## Educating Your Customer as to Terms

By Dorothy W. Gill  
Credit Manager, The H. H. West Co., Milwaukee, Wis.

THE first step in educating your customers to observe your terms is a good collection department—and this is a vital necessity to any business. A store whose credit or collection methods are lax is really doing an injury both to customer and community, for it results in a like carelessness on the part of its customers in meeting their obligations. There is no doubt that a large number of people find it very difficult to part with money—unless it is absolutely necessary. Some of these are ignorant of the value of good credit—and others are simply careless of it. They argue that they are well known, that the store knows they will pay eventually, and they don't see any reason why they should pay up now. It is our job to teach them—and no small job either.

To be truly successful, a collection department must not only collect past due accounts, but must see that the customer takes no offense, at the manner of collecting. Many of us fear that if we press our patrons unduly, that they will give their business to our competitor—and they sometimes do. But as a general rule, the thinking person—and he makes the finest sort of customer—realizes that the store whose collection methods are firm is in a better position to give him what he wants. That store can keep the confidence of its trade, and incidentally, keep its accounts in tip top shape.

Fortunately for us, in this age, public opinion is with the creditor. The time has passed when sympathy was felt only for the man or woman dragged to the bar of justice. Pride and self respect prevent our poor pay friends from wishing their condition advertised. No one wants to be known as one who does not or cannot pay his bills. The noon-day meetings of the various credit men's associations throughout the country are an immense help in this respect, and it is a pity that so little about them is known by the general public. Our customers might be more inclined to pay promptly if they had any idea that by so doing there would not be a chance of being listed with the delinquents, and that several hundred creditmen—some of them friends and neighbors—have access to that list.

No set rule can be applied to instructing your customer in the value of credit. Nearly every case is different. There may be dissatisfaction with the merchandise—the clerk may have failed to show the proper amount of deference that the customer felt was his or her due—or half a hundred other reasons why your patron feels justified in withholding payment. It is up to the credit or collection manager to find the cause and remedy it if in his power, and at the same time, soothe the ruffled feelings of the injured.

Of course, your terms must be fully understood, and referred to frequently. And remember, that no one really likes to be reminded of an overdue account. It's a human trait. Some folks even consider it an insult! But it's our job to see that collections are made, without seriously annoying or offending these people.

Collection letters should be very courteous, and not too stereotyped. If form letters are used, they should be changed frequently. If not, your customer will recognize them a second time, and know what's coming.

Appeal should be made to his sense of pride. Call attention to the injury his credit is sustaining—but don't make your letters too interesting. No doubt you've all heard the story of the jobber who sent his salesman to call on a western customer, to see why payment was being held up. The salesman found the store in a good location, business evidently was brisk, and the owner admitted that collections were fine. On being asked why he had not sent in a check, he replied, "We've been using your collection letters on our customers, and we've waited to be sure we got the whole set." That does happen. Don't bluff in your letters. If you threaten a man with an attorney on a certain date—fulfill your threat! He'll believe you another time.

We have found the telephone a very fine collecting medium. For one thing, you can get in personal touch with your customer, and he is sure to tell you any fault he may have found with your merchandise or your service. And you can get a direct promise from him. If his word is not kept, call again and again—each time being a little more insistent. Just now, of course, many of our customers are simply up against it, due to the conditions of the times. Some of them have been very good pay, and we have to show leniency in their cases.

Then there are people with whom the kid glove method is absolutely useless. You have to go after them hard, and then when you have them in the proper frame of mind, bring home to them the error of their ways. One big trouble with this class is that frequently you don't recognize them in the beginning and after you've wasted lots of time, you wonder whether their trade is worth the trouble you've taken to retain it.

Co-operation among credit men, I believe, is going to be the best aid to educating our customers. When they realize that they must pay up their old accounts before they can open new ones, they will be more apt to pay some attention to the terms printed on your statement and bills, and pay in accordance of them. In the meantime, we have to watch them closely, and remind them frequently, when they stray from the paths of right paying.

### SELLING WITH A SMILE

By H. Goehler, Treasurer, Powers Furniture Co., Portland, Ore.

From the record of our customers' reasons for trading with us, we find that out of 380 sales, over 200 have bought of us because of a previous purchase or because some one of our customers has recommended them to trade here.

This part of our trade constitutes the nucleus of our business. It costs nothing except Service which they were entitled to when they bought our goods. It also makes us realize that we are doing business in a large part on our reputation: Our reputation for Value; Our reputation for Terms; and our reputation for Service. (By this I mean our reputation for not having complaints or for taking care of them when we do have them.)

Any time anyone associated with us meets a customer, we either build or mar that reputation, and we accordingly help or hurt our business of the next year and future years.

We can never see the end of a human action, however slight, for its influence never dies, but spreads in never-ending circles. It would astonish us if we would know what small things "throw" sales.

This applies to all of us: Shipping Department, Credit Department, Sales Department, and Managers. By this I mean we must have a standard, and just as we set that standard and keep it, in that measure will this be a successful institution. We all know what that standard should be.

Every chair is a potential sign-board for us, and every customer is a Sunday ad. But we must teach our customers what to expect and see that they get it.

Occasional mistakes will happen, but most of them are through carelessness. The investigation of the first complaint is sometimes a good ad—a second complaint usually the loss of a customer.

For this reason, it is highly important that when complaints are received they be handled immediately. Adjustment should be made promptly and if the complaint is a reasonable one the adjustment should be made in a manner that will please and satisfy the customer. Make the complaining customer a satisfied one.

MANY OF OUR CUSTOMERS ARE FUSSY PEOPLE. LET US WELCOME THEM. THEY ARE THE BAROMETERS OF OUR BUSINESS AND TELL US WHEN WE ARE NOT GOING RIGHT.

When we are aggravated from this source or any other, let us not permit ourselves to become sour but make a resolution to be happy as it is the little things that make discord. If you are happy, you do not need to cultivate a "SELLING SMILE."

Anyone can tell when a person is happy, and most people nowadays know when you are only simulating happiness.

Happiness is transparent. Start the day right.

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## Educating Your Customers as to Terms

By Eilla C. Harder

THE old adage "Well begun is half done" applies as much to this subject as to any I know.

The first chance and the easiest way to begin educating your customers to pay promptly is by thoroughly explaining the matter of terms when the account is being opened. If you have a chance to talk to the customer at this time you can tell him what rules you have established and impress him with the strictness of your collection department. You can explain that the collection department follows the same policy of fairness to all alike and explain that for this reason you are very particular to have every one on your books meet the same terms. This can be done very courteously but at the same time firmness must always be maintained.

It is also well to write the new customer, expressing your thanks for the account, and again informing him about your terms. The same principle applies in educating your customers as to terms, as in educating them to a store's policies, quality of merchandise, reliability, etc., through consecutive advertising. Each advertisement leaves some impression on the reader, and the constant hammering of advertising makes the impression noticeable. Just so the constant stating of terms makes an impression. If terms are stated verbally when the account is opened, again stated courteously in a letter of acknowledgment, and the customer again sees the terms stated on his first statement, he has by this time become conscious of the impression that your house is particular about payments being made promptly.

If, however, your terms are not met, although every effort has been made to establish them in the customer's mind, the real problem begins. Although it is essential to proceed courteously, apologetic argument is not desirable.

One of the poorest ways to really educate your customer is by apologizing for requesting payment. If you make an excuse for asking for your money at one time, it will be necessary to think of a new reason each time you make the request. If you request your money because you have a certain obligation to meet, you impart the thought that you would not expect prompt payment unless you required the money for a special purpose. Furthermore you are putting yourself in the position of being favored instead of being the master.

Personally, I like collection letters of the following style and have found them very effective.

"Our books show a balance of \$20.00 on your account. Is there any adjustment due you which has held up payment? If some adjustment is necessary, will you not advise us promptly, as we shall take pleasure in

seeing that the matter is adjusted to your entire satisfaction.

"If there is no reason for withholding payment, we would greatly appreciate remittance."

There is some objection to a letter like this because it gives the customer a chance to make an excuse, but I do not object to this as it shows the customer that you desire to do your part and if he has a complaint you do want to know it. A letter of this type gives the recipient the impression that you feel he must have a good reason for not living up to your terms. It shows your faith in him, and brings him a spirit of fairness.

I believe in sending collection letters in rapid succession after they are started, working always from a different angle to discover the reason payment is being withheld. Once you find the reason the matter can be adjusted. It is well to try to get the customer to come in for a heart to heart talk. Show him that if something unforeseen has happened you are willing to help. The same principle applies here as in making a sale—if you can discover your prospect's objection, it is simple enough to overcome it.

There are, however, accounts on which reason and fairness make no impression. But the house does not wish to lose the trade of even this class, although you would not continue to sell them on account. For this reason I think either of the following plans very effective. Either let an auditor who is not connected with your house do the collecting in his name, or after advising the customer that it will be necessary to turn the account over to a Collection Agency, send out your threatening letters on Collection Agency stationery. This Collection Agency, of course, has no further existence than on your letter heads. The address and phone number can be that of some public stenographer who would handle your messages for a nominal sum.

In every city and locality the matter of educating your customer to pay promptly can be best furthered by co-operation. If each merchant makes it a practice to bring the matter to the attention of the customer, leaving no room for doubt as to his attitude, the customer will think more of paying all his bills promptly. I feel that all of us who are extending credit at this time have cause to be very grateful for the growth of the spirit of co-operation among business houses.

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## The Professional Grouch

THE professional grouch is a person who carries an incubator of ill-will in his topnot from which he is constantly hatching impulsive irritability, impudent incivility, peevish haughtiness cantankerous arrogance, and impetuous illusions.

When this venom of ill-will is let loose it is as contagious as the small-pox. In fact, this type of individual finds greedy delight in using his dome as a breeding place for pests of ignominy. The ill-natured crab imagines that his imperial presence is an essential to mankind and that the future of the human race would be imperiled by his absence.

The most gouty pessimist is only a second cousin to the professional grouch. Even Old Gus Gloom never had anything on him. He simply wasn't in his class. But while a fellow might get along with Old Gus if he had to, with Grouch it is impossible. One can even make allowances for a pessimist but for the grouchily ill-wisher in life nothing can satisfy or appease.

If it should ever happen that the bare outline of a smile became visible on the four corners of his face, it would instantly freeze up if it caught a glimpse in a mirror. In fact, the professional grouch has never been known to smile. It is not a part of his nature. He does his job so well that smiles are as rare on his countenance of gloom as alligators at the north pole. His face is always a study in cubism.

For this type of human the sun never shines, the birds never sing. All the world is shrouded in gloom. He has so completely succeeded in alienating the good will and affections of other humans that he has even alienated himself from his own better self.

When he tries to frown it takes sixty-five muscles of his face to create the desired expression. Where formerly it only took thirteen to create an honest-to-gosh smile, now it takes thirteen plus sixty-five, and so it cannot be done. The muscles of his face have completely atrophied from long disuse.

It even pains the professional grouch to see others happy, to hear human laughter. He is always envious of his fellows and begrudges their smallest pleasures. He may tolerate tears and weeping, but he loathes it even more than laughter. His emotions lie dormant for all but himself. Laughter is for fools and tears for lunatics according to his code of ignominious hate. Nervous and excitable, he is always fretting about something which does not concern him. He is always a fault-finder, never a fault-mender.

The professional grouch is so completely wrapped up in his own innate selfishness that he has become nearsighted to his own defects and imagines himself imparadised. This ill-boding idolater idolizes himself and fancies he is an angel with sprouting wings whose duty it is to watch over mankind.



After years of servitude to his own selfishness he becomes entitled to the blue ribbon of the Order of Successful Grouches. There is no hope for any who join this order after they retire to the sacred cloister. If he ever again associates with other human beings it is merely to satisfy his own wants and not for companionship or fraternizing. If he ventures forth he is sure to crawl back into his shell of hate like the turtle and the snail. His soul becomes shrouded in the blackness of doom.

Initiation into this order is usually preceded by all sorts of insurmountable obstacles which they place in their own pathways. It is said that if a person can successfully pass through this degree of perfection without flinching that he becomes a full-fledged member of the order of potentate grouches. The ego of the "I", always predominant in the grouch, becomes immortalized after that and there is no more hope for the "WE" or the "YOU."

The mental retrogression and physical degeneration which sets in after a person becomes successively grumpy, gloom, and grouch, excite their ego to a superlative degree and henceforth they utterly ignore the considerate attentions due others which they themselves demand. Incivility, irritability, indifference, preferment and general superiority characterize their outward behavior. Impudent uppishness, peevish haughtiness, cantankerous arrogance, and

impious hate habitually accompany them due to a false notion of their own exaggerated self-importance.

They become utterly intolerant and impatiently unwilling to observe the ordinary social proprieties which other mortals recognize, and are diametrically opposed to conceding to others those courteous attentions and humane considerations they insist upon exacting for themselves. Indignation and resentment reign supreme in their impenitent make-up. This eventually breaks down the barriers of their resistance and they become completely isolated from all other human beings. Bias, prejudice, pugnacity, and unfairness mark their human relationships.

Thus does the igneous worm impawn his own soul to gratify his personal desires. In his immaculate thoughts the immensity of his crime against society is immolated on the altar of an implacable selfishness. He becomes impassive to pain and suffering. For the slightest imagined offense he calls down the imprecations of Deity upon the heads of innocents. Impecunious of joy and happiness and impervious to all emotion, he becomes a recluse and as odious to his fellow men as the vilest leper. He impugns the good will and intentions of all with whom he comes in contact. The idle-pated prattler engages in imbroglis at the slightest provocation.

After all has been said and done, who would be a grouch?

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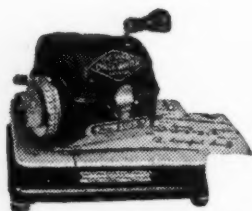
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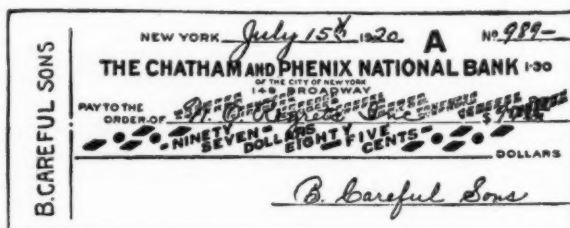
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## SPECIAL WARNINGS

Strong, J. M.

A man giving this name recently succeeded in passing checks drawn on First National Bank of Cincinnati, using firm name of Kempner-Thomas Co., Advertising Specialties, signed by J. A. Simmons, Treasurer. Recently in Port Huron, Michigan. Be on look-out for him, he may be same party that has operated in other cities in Michigan.

Ellis, B. W.

Recently published notice this party had operated in Trenton, N. J., now understand he also operated in Roanoke, Va., that he was arrested there, but secured bond, and now gone to parts unknown, used name of C. L. Betts, while in Roanoke had an accomplice by the name of Kaufmann. His method of operation is to give the impression he wishes to buy a home, and has some good real estate salesman go around with him, in this way he gets acquainted with some of the best people of the City. Understand he left on a train bound for Memphis, may operate in some city in that vicinity.

### \$25.00 REWARD—

\$25.00 will be paid for the apprehension of a "Check Artist," using the name of A. W. Perkins. He is of Hebrew nationality, 5 ft. 7 in. tall, weighs about 150 lbs., 30 years of age, well dressed. He wore Masonic emblems and presented Masonic card showing that he was in good standing in the Blue Lodge at Churdan, Iowa. Presents checks on First National Bank of Churdan, Ia. We have Bulletined this fellow before, many of our members are anxious to have him arrested

Grayner, Clifford.

This fellow is a clever swindler, recently visited Denver, his method is to apply for a position as salesman in men's clothing department, giving as reference L. M. Rothschild Clo. Co., of Chicago, seems to be well acquainted throughout the East, calling managers of various stores by name, is a good salesman, makes a sale, makes check out as though a deposit of \$5.00 or \$10.00 has been made, balance C. O. D., and then pockets more than half the sales he makes. Only stayed two days, skipped town. He is about 35 years old, 5 ft. 6 in., weighs about 135 pounds, florid complexion, black, wavy hair, Jewish type. Warrant out for his arrest. May use a different name.

Ellis, B. W.

This party recently visited Trenton, N. J., represented the U. S. Lock Nut Co., of Chicago. Opened an office, then went to a prominent real estate firm, stated he wished to buy a home, had the best salesman go around with him, in this way became acquainted with the best people. Made a purchase of a dress at a leading department store, which was to be delivered C. O. D. to

his office, had an engagement with real estate salesman to close deal for house, gave check for \$200.00 as deposit, then asked him to go to the store with him and state he was B. W. Ellis, so that he could open an account or have a check cashed in order to pay for the dress. Checks on Merchants Loan & Trust Co. of Chicago. He is described as about 35 or 40 years, 5 ft. 9 in. tall, 140 lbs., thin face, clean shaven, upper lip protruding and his expression being that of a sneaky nature, hair inclined to be dark, tinged with gray. His wife is about 5 ft. tall, thin, dark complexion.

Gromek, Peter, Alias Edward Adamek, Adam Hlowacek, Frank Wacek.

This party appears at a bank, at Foreign Exchange Department and presents a passbook showing entries to amount of several thousand dollars, forgeries, after exhibiting the passbook he presents check for several hundred dollars, drawn by "Skora Bros. Leather Findings Co., of Chicago, to the Second Security Bank of Chicago, also requests that the bank have his account withdrawn from the bank on which the passbook is drawn, usually some distant city, on the strength of passbook the checks are cashed. He is about 40 years of age, Polish nationality, 5 ft. 5 in. tall, weighs about 140 lbs., slender build, light complexion, straight nose, black hair, gray on sides, smooth shaven, hollow cheeks, fairly well dressed.

\$2,000.00 REWARD offered to be divided as follows: \$500.00 for arrest and conviction of LILLIAN McDOWELL. \$1,500.00 for the recovery of articles stolen from a private residence, where she was employed, at Cleveland Heights, Ohio. Lillian McDowell, alias, Lillie McDowell, Elsie Webb, Clara Stratton, Lillian McDowell, Lillian Barrett, Martha Benson, Martha Darcy, Helen King, Lillian Redmond, Nettie Atkinson, Mrs. G. H. Grant, Mary Darcy. "Cat-Eye," age 39 years, weighs about 135 lbs., 5 ft. 5 in. tall, dark chestnut hair, light complexion, blue eyes, left eye half chestnut and upper half blue. She has served time in several institutions.

Marks, H. D., Alias, Phillip De Bruin:

This party is still at large, and we are anxious to get him. He is indicted for embezzlement, wife and child desertion. We have Bulletined him before. Members please be on lookout for him. 5 ft. 11 in. tall, dark complexion, brown eyes, black hair, slightly streaked with gray, thick lips, scar under lower lip, large feet, may wear a mustache, about 45 years old, occupation salesman.

Meirstein, Ralph, alias Roy E. Howard.

Cleveland is holding this party, and state they will prosecute, understand he is wanted in Kansas City and Terre Haute, Indiana. If you are interested, get in touch with Cleveland Retail Credit Men's Co., at once.

Wainwright, Virginia, Alias, Ellen Parker, Alias, Florence Wilson and several others, is again being held in Mason, Michigan, just completed a 1 year term, but there are several warrants still out against her. If you are interested, wire Hugh Silsbee, Sheriff Ingham County, Mason, Mich.

Haines, Charles Delemar.

This party we understand is now in Jail in Orlando, Florida, he is a "Bad Check Artist," was arrested in Baltimore, and returned to Orlando.

Bird, Mrs. Hope or Mrs. P. H. (Hope) Seelbinder.

We think her real name is Mrs. Seelbinder, she was arrested in Chicago. Understand she operated in Cincinnati, Pittsburgh, Philadelphia. She is about 28 years old, blue eyes, about 146 lbs., medium build, medium chestnut hair.

We understand these parties have been apprehended in San Antonio, Texas, if you are interested, get in touch with National Office at once.

Talbott, E. C., J. H. Cowan.

This party recently operated in Dubuque, Iowa, representing himself to be with The Con. T. Kennedy Shows, cashed checks on the Third National Bank, Dayton, Ohio, printed check of the Apex Electrical Distributing Co., signed in ink, George C. Wilson, District Mgr., endorsed on back E. C. Talbott, 912 Edgecomb Pl., Chicago. Had a letter on printed stationery as means of identification. This sounds very much like party using name of J. H. Cowan, who recently operated in Des Moines, who used the check of The Apex Electrical Company. Be on lookout for these checks.

Bailey, J. R.

A party using this name recently came to Fort Wayne, Ind., applied for position in an electrical shop, worked two days, then left for parts unknown taking several vacuum cleaners with him. He is 5 ft. 6 in. tall, stout, weighs about 185 lbs, dark complexion, round face, about 25 years of age, decided southern accent.

Strong, J. M.

This party we understand also operated in Fort Wayne, Ind., giving checks supposed to be issued by Kemper Thomas Co., of Cincinnati, signed by J. R. Simmons, Treas., made payable to J. M. Strong. He is about 38 years of age, short heavy build.

Thornton, Herbert E.

This party we understand recently succeeded in cashing a fraudulent check in Detroit, also recently operated in Cleveland, check on Bank of Commerce, Cleveland, made payable to Herbert E. Thornton. He is about 30 years of age, 5 ft. 6 in. tall, clean shaven, brown hair, blue eyes, smooth talker, formerly a British War Veteran, uses this guise to identify.

## Addresses Wanted

- Allard, Miss Loraine, 1770 Kilbourne Street, Washington, D. C. Last heard of in Charleston, S. Carolina. Hair dressing establishment.
- Ames, Mrs. A. L., Fort Worth, Texas. Operated what is known as a tent hotel in the Texas towns during the oil boom there in 1920 and 1921. At one time lived at Homer, La., and Desdemona, Texas.
- Barbara, Louis F., 726 Valencia Street, Los Angeles, California. Was with Santa Fe R. R. Police Dept. in California. Previously Lt. B. & O. R. R. Police Dept., Cleveland, Ohio. Now believed to be in Chicago.
- Barker, William M., Duluth, Minneapolis, Bank Cashier.
- Bartholomew, D., Miami, Florida.
- Baldwin, H. D., 7308 Wade Park Avenue, Cleveland, Ohio.
- Batey, William H., Nashville, Tennessee. Watch Repairer. 18-20 years old.
- Batey, W. T., Nashville, Tennessee, Age 45 years.
- Baxter, Ralph, 3240 Potter St., Lincoln, Nebraska.
- Berigan Miss Nonica, Champaign or Chicago, Illinois, 1916-17-18. Cashier Bell Telephone Company.
- Berigan, Gertrude, Champaign or Chicago, Illinois. Waitress at Decatur, Illinois. Left Decatur some time in the Spring of 1918.
- Betts, Arnold B., Grand Forks, N. D., and Crookston, Minn. Supposed to be living in Chicago.
- Black, Frank B., Denver, Colorado, and Wichita Falls, Texas, is liable to be in Oklahoma City. Oil Operator.
- Bordeaux, Merilda, 853 Acoma Street Denver, Colo. Formerly 1121 S. 14th St., Lincoln, Nebraska.
- Buffus, F. S., New Orleans, La. Also at one time Mobile, Alabama. Lumber.
- Byrd, Mr. Frank M., 311 Dolphin St., Baltimore, Maryland.
- Brady, Alice, 2530 Q St., Lincoln, Nebraska.
- Brewster, Claude, Fort Worth, Texas. Clerk in one of the Banks while living here and since has moved to California.
- Bryant, L. N., 801 Grove Street, Vicksburg, Miss.
- Broshears, L. M., Railroad Brakeman, Springfield, Missouri.
- Butler, Mrs. F. G., Hagerstown, Maryland. Father's name W. E. Benton, Hyattsville, Md.
- Butler, Mrs. F. G., c-o the Cinderella Lamp Shade Shop, 14th St. N. W., Washington, D. C.
- Chapman, Mrs. Bobbie, 415 W. 9th St., Davenport, Iowa. Kitchen Help, Hotel. Went to Chicago, and is going to Philadelphia to her husband's sister.
- Clark, L. S., Hagerstown, Maryland. Reported to have gone to Roanoke, Va. Employed by one of the R. R. Companies.
- Costello, Stanley, 7816 Force Ave., Cleveland, Ohio.
- Crafford, Floyd, Fort Morgan, Colorado. Electrician employed by some outfit in Kansas City until recently worked for the Carroll Motor Co., of Brush, Colo. Has left for Cheyenne, Wyo.
- Crueger, H. C., Roanoke, Virginia., 902 S. Jefferson St. Reported to be in the army about three years.
- Cummings, P. O., 1718 Q Street, Lincoln, Nebraska. Was at Navy Yard, Philadelphia, Pa.
- Cuttrell, Mr. Charles, Walsenburg, Colorado. Supposed to have gone to Ottumwa, Iowa.
- Dashiell, Mrs. F., Arthur Street, Winchester, Va.
- Deahl, Mrs. Gladys Wayne, 1538 S. 18th St., Lincoln, Nebraska.
- Dimmons, W. N., Topeka, Kansas. Advertising Man. Supposed to have gone to Cleveland, Ohio.
- Dudley, G. N., 619 Seymour St., Lansing, Michigan. Y. M. C. A. Was extra help not an official.
- Duncan, R., 419 N. 10th St., Lincoln, Nebraska.
- Eley, R. W., 1201 N. 26th St., Lincoln, Nebraska.
- Evers, Willette, Council Bluffs, Iowa.
- Foll, H. M., Circleville, Ohio. Stockbroker.
- Fordack, Joseph, Glasgow Montana.
- Franko or Frankenburg, Allen, 920 E. 18th St., Albany Hotel; Savoy Hotel, Denver, Colo., also said at one time to have been in Chicago.
- Friedrich, Miss Gertrude, 2417 25th Ave. S., Minneapolis, Minn. Teacher.
- Garris, Mr. Ray J., 109 N. 9th St., Lincoln, Nebraska.
- Gillis & Frost, Minneapolis, Minn. Architects.
- Golden, Irenee, 595 Madison Ave., Memphis, Tenn.
- Goodwin, Mrs. Allen or Lillie May, Fullerton, Maryland.
- Herron, Mrs. G. F., 119 W. 13th St., Davenport, Ia. Musician with Collins Shows.
- Hansen, Paul A., Lincoln, Nebr.
- Hess, R. J., 1904 K Street, Lincoln, Nebr.
- Hirsch, S. G., Hagerstown, Md. Moved to New York, N. Y.
- Inge, Mr. Eugene W., Wentworth Apts., Baltimore, Maryland.
- Johnson, Miss Ingeborg, Duluth, Winnipeg, and Minneapolis. Icelandic Tailoress.
- Jones, Mr. Roy, 907 L St., Lincoln, Nebraska.
- Keegan, Frank, 13468 Clifton Boulevard, Cleveland, Ohio.
- Kelley, Patrick H., 907 L St., Lincoln, Nebraska.
- Klein, Stephen, Baltimore, Maryland. Now supposed to be located somewhere in Philadelphia.
- Lt. Com. Walter D. Lamonte, U. S. N., 12 Maryland Ave., Annapolis, Md.
- Lawrence, William, 2719 Gaines Street, Little Rock, Arkansas. Formerly of Fort Smith, Arkansas.
- Lehmaster, Chas., Hagerstown, Maryland. 291 Brown Street, Akron, Ohio.
- Longwell, Prof. J. B., Philadelphia, Pa. Coach Harvard College.
- Markland, Warren R., Springfield, Illinois. Better known as "Denny". Usually employed as stage hand or stage manager.
- Marshall, Mr. Geo., Wilmington, Del. Later Brooklyn. Later San Francisco, California.
- McCreary, Mr. Willard K., Wilmington, Delaware. Was in U. S. Army Cavalry Division, later was in San Antonio and El Paso, Texas.
- McCormick, Miss Lola, 673 Jackson Street, Milwaukee, Wisconsin. Rice Shoe Company. Said to be in St. Louis.
- McLaughlin, Mrs. W. D., Arlington Hotel, Washington, D. C., later the Earle, 103 Waverly Place, New York City.
- Meloche, W. A., San Francisco, California. Mining Engineer.
- Mohler, Mrs. H., 1399 E 86, Cleveland, Ohio.
- Mondery, L. M., Ardock, North Dakota.
- Moore, J. R., Cedar Bluffs, Kansas.
- Moore, James, S., 303 Fraternity Bldg., Lincoln, Nebraska.
- Moughton, J. J., Gwinner, North Dakota. Newspaper Man.
- Neary, George A., 743 E. Preston Street, Baltimore, Md.
- Nicholas, Vernon C., 2340 N. 65th St., Omaha, Nebraska. Painter. Later moved to Portland, Oregon, addresses there were 4722-79th St. and 2340 West 60th St. He also lived in Hood River, Oregon.
- Ospring, Andy J., Emporia, Kansas. Book Salesman. Supposed to be in St. Louis, selling books.
- Pitts, Mr. John H., 527 S. 11th St., Lincoln, Nebraska.
- Ray, F. A., 3415 Q St., Lincoln, Nebraska.
- Reisbeg, Jacob, 1504 N. 14 and 1022 S. 22 St., Lincoln, Nebr.
- Rhienhamer, C. L. and Trossie, Hood River, Oregon.
- Rissman, F. J., Minneapolis, Minn. R. R. Man.
- Roberts, Wynn M., 1127 Morton Ave., Sioux Falls, S. Dakota. Worked for Tirehill Lumber Company, left for Minneapolis.
- Rose, J. Gordon, 205 W. 27th St., Los Angeles, California.
- Ryan, James, Providence, Rhode Island. Steward and works at various camps and fraternity houses.
- St. John, Richard C., Brooklyn, New York. With Brooklyn Rapid Transit Co.
- Searl, A. J., Painted Post, New York. Ran a Floral Store.
- Severson, Miss Rosamond. Suite 17, Lenora Apts., Winnipeg, Man.





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